

Quality of School Life for Working Students

A Study Conducted among Working Students of 8th Grade in a Primary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to contribute to develop knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon *school life quality* for working students by taking the perspective of the students themselves investigating what they perceive as positive or/and negative about their school life. Further objectives of the study are to investigate how work, parents and school may influence on their school life. The study is conducted among working students in a primary school in a district in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

A questionnaire is used to get information about students' general background particularly relating to work and school. The main study is qualitative using a phenomenological approach. Six students from grade 8 are selected for in-depth interviews. Parents of the students as well as two principals are interviewed while focus group discussion is used to get data from teachers in grade 8. The collected data are analysed according to a phenomenological-thematic analysis model.

Findings indicate that what contributes to students' quality of school life seems first of all to be their relation to the teachers. The devotion of the teachers and the caring interaction between teacher and student are perceived by them to be essential. Further the students express as important to get knowledge, as that is considered to give them the opportunity to improve their lives in the future. Physical conditions related to school are perceived differently. These aspects are discussed in relation to the following dimensions fetched from a phenomenological study conducted by Tangen (1998) on school life quality: "*Dimension of Time*", "*Relation to Others*", "*Dimension of Work (Content)*" and "*Control of one's own School Life*".

The answers to the questionnaires indicate that the students are involved in many different kinds of activities and most of them working in order to assist their family. How work influences on their education seems to depend on their own perception of the work they do, whether they like it or not, and to what extent it is an obligation.

The principals and the teachers as well as the parents all express positive attitudes to education, mainly as a means to secure a better future life. Related to the working students' conditions, however, data show that the teachers and the principals seem to base their information on assumptions. Further the findings reveal lack of cooperation between school and parents.

Considering the fact that the majority of the students work it seems to be lack of awareness and knowledge on the importance of identifying the conditions of the working students in order to reveal how work may influence on the quality of the school life of every individual student.

From the findings recommendations are made. In order to secure quality of school life for working students the teachers need to listen to the voices of their students to understand and to get knowledge about their conditions. Teachers should be empowered to develop competence within areas of special needs education, particularly on assessment which also means including the parents in a closer cooperation.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

Kidus

Thank you for challenging me on my own attitudes, values, beliefs and knowledge.

You contributed to reflection and development.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The ultimate aim of this study is to contribute to knowledge development about the phenomenon *quality of school life* of working students in Ethiopia, and to investigate what kind of work they do and how it may influence on their school life. This study further focuses on the students' nearest environment– especially parents and teachers – in order to investigate how they may influence on the students' school life.

My main argument in conducting this study is that knowledge and understanding of the students' lives at school and in their nearest environment is assumed to provide the school with important information. This will enable the school to adapt its educational activities according to the needs of this specific group of students and hence improve the quality of school life for working students. One way of achieving this is through listening to the voice of the students themselves.

This chapter presents objectives and justification of the study followed by an overview of historical, political and socio-economic background of Ethiopia. Further the situation of Ethiopian students with focus on working students as well as the development of the educational system will be described followed by a portrayal of the school and its environment seen through the eyes of the researcher. The chapter ends with a reflection upon the background and role of the researcher as an “outsider” with an external view of the study arena. First, however, perspectives and concepts central to this study will be presented, namely “*listening to the voice of the child*”, “*quality of school life*” and “*working students*”.

1.2. Listening to the Voice of the Child

In order to develop knowledge about quality of school life for working students the importance of taking the perspective of the students has already been mentioned. In an article about the quality of school life, Reidun Tangen (1998) emphasizes the importance of listening to the voice of the child. She points out that in educational research rather little attention has been given to the students' own experiences and perceptions about their school life. In different sectors of today's society the demand is made that we listen to the child's voice. Article 12 concerning the child's opinion in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states:

“States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”.

Tangen is one of few researchers arguing for the need of developing knowledge about the experiences of the school life seen from the students' own perspective. This knowledge is necessary in order to improve the school. Goodlad is another researcher that in his study about school improvement found that there was little knowledge about the school life seen from the students' perspective.

“Very few individuals (...) thought about curricula from the student's perspective.” Goodlad (1984, p.31).

For researchers and educators the challenge is, therefore, to listen to the voice of the student itself, and from the knowledge gained contribute to the improvement of school life for all students. Hopefully this may become an issue not only for the educators and researchers, but also for the policymakers. Perhaps the use of the concept quality of school life could inspire these groups of professionals to increase their sensitivity towards the students' own voices.

Conducting this research in Ethiopia in a culture different from that in our western society raises the question if it is possible to gain valid information when listening to the voice of the student in Ethiopia, a country very different from the local

environment of the researcher. Will they tell from their hearts and openly share their experiences and perceptions or will they answer what is expected of them? Even more important is the question if the culture allows their experiences to make up the bases for improvements and let their voice be heard by the authorities? The pattern of relations between adults and children in Ethiopia may be said to be hierarchical. This is claimed in a study conducted by Eva Poluha (2004) among students in a primary school in Addis Ababa. The most frequently used words of the students about their own behaviour towards adults, were obedience and respect, while they expected adults to exercise control and supervision over them. The duties adults and children performed for each other were related to these concepts. Based on this one may assume that this would affect the students' way of expressing themselves. This is one among several factors that has to be taken into consideration by the researcher. However, the nature of this research implies that knowledge about school life of the students is found among the students themselves.

1.3. Quality of School Life

Throughout the 1990ies professionals have discussed quality in education and in special needs education, mostly based on criteria developed by professional educators (Tetler, 2002). But what about raising the following important question; what if special needs education was seen from the perspective of the students themselves? Tangen (1998) develops the concept school life quality based on the understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives related to school. She developed a model which served as a tool when analyzing and understanding aspects of the meanings of experiences reported by students. This is described in more detail in chapter 3.

The concept school life quality is rather complicated. Tangen has chosen to look upon school life quality not as a definitory concept, but a sensory one. This indicates that knowledge about school life of students is found among the students themselves based on their subjective experiences and perceptions. Thereby she aimed

at developing a concept that grasps positive as well as negative aspects. This means there is no **one** definition of *school life quality*. In my research I aim at developing the concept by focusing on good and bad experiences, on what the working students like and dislike about their school life, which means using *satisfaction* as a criterion. Goodlad (1984) in “A Place called School” also argues for the use of *satisfaction* as criterion for school quality when investigating various aspects of the school life of students.

Within life quality research it seems to be widely agreed that the subjective dimension is the basic. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1990, p. 34-35)

“Quality of life is a matter of subjective experience. That is to say, the concept has no meaning apart from what a person feels and experiences”.

This means that persons may experience the same thing differently and the quality of life of a person may change from time to time. Not many educational researchers, however, have been interested in quality of life as a subjective concept.

In addition to using the subjective dimension researchers of life quality also operate with a so called objective dimension using certain indicators. Quality of life in general is usually understood and explained related to indicators such as health, education, economic status, work, housing and social and cultural conditions. In a similar way quality of school life could be related to certain educational conditions. I am thinking about educational policy, other frame factors decided by school authorities within which the school administration has to work and the quality of the education offered to the students. These conditions are examples of an objective dimension which must be assumed as important aspects when considering the quality of the school life for students. This is not the main focus of this research.

1.4. Working Students

The group of students focused on in this study is from 14 years and up to 17 and are in grade 8. They all have some work outside school.

The majority of the world's children do some work every day. Many children carry out domestic duties for their families. Others are involved in family businesses, trading, factory work or sex work. Work can be paid or unpaid and take place inside and outside the home. Most of the work is in the form of household chores or an after school job, which is likely to develop skills and a sense of responsibility. Work may be an essential part of children's development transmitting vital skills from parents to the next generation. Other children may work because it is the cultural norm to start work at an early age, rather than spending childhood playing. Further many children live in economically deprived families and hence have to work to ensure the survival of themselves and their families. Factors that have to do with lack of quality of the education system can also lead to children leaving school and entering the labour market before they have completed education.

In a study carried out in five different countries (Blanc, 1994), children themselves indicate a number of reasons for working. They derive satisfaction from work, enjoy helping others, want extra money for themselves, and have to contribute to the household income. Some are forced to work in a kind of "enslavement", while others have to support themselves because of loss of parents or caretaker.

Work done by children and adolescents usually give help to a financially difficult situation of the family and secure basic survival, but may involve long hours and lead to exploitation, abuse, ill health or injury and deprive them of the opportunity to education and play. Such conditions are according to the Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO, 1999) considered as hazardous. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) the harsh reality is that 390 million child-workers worldwide are involved in activities that are either hazardous, excessive or where their employer exploits them (International Labour Office, Geneva, April 2002). The

emotional, physical and psychological effects for these children can be extremely damaging and such work leaves little or no time for play or school.

Some working students do not continue schooling and drop out because they cannot afford or do not have the time or the energy to attend school. Their lack of education limits their future employment and makes it difficult to move out of poverty. For other students work does not mean an end to schooling, but may lead to irregular attendance, poor academic results and students repeating classes. Work may deny students their rights to a meaningful, quality education which is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991). A working paper issued by Save the Children UK (2000) reviews recent research on long-term implications of child labour. It highlights education and health as key areas for intervention alongside with poverty reduction measures. It calls for good quality, appropriate and flexible education systems that meet the needs of working children.

Children working evoke much debate. On the one hand there are those who argue that work contributes to socialize children into skills and knowledge; that it creates a sense of independence and provides satisfaction, self-esteem and self-confidence. It is also argued that it is possible to combine education and work. On the other hand there are the arguments against claiming that work interferes with education and play and that children who work are at risk (Boyden et.al.,1998; Gunnarsson, 2000).

In the economy of poor families the work that the children are doing is important. However, a child's right to education, health and recreation should be respected through keeping these work obligations at a minimum. Seen in an international context the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) obliges governments to protect those under 18 from performing any hazardous work, or any work likely to interfere with a child's education. The International Labour Organization has also passed two conventions on child labour: Convention 138 (1973) and Convention 182 (1999). In promoting the children's rights, each of these instruments has been motivated by an interest in protecting children from exploitation through their labour and providing for education as a preferable alternative.

Child labour was once a major concern in the industrialized countries of Europe, in North America and in Japan. At one time, labour legislation and worksite inspection were thought to have been the principal agents of child labour reform in these countries. Following this example, many developing countries have introduced legislation setting a minimum age for work or regulating children's involvement in hazardous or less harmful activities. The results, however, were not as good as expected so one began to look for other forces in the reduction of child labour such as compulsory education, increased family wealth and improved technology. As it now seems that education played a key role in the elimination of child labour in the industrialized countries it is now claimed that schooling is one of the most effective instruments for a change. Education has to be accessible to all and of good quality and hence prevent the children from being recruited in the labour force. The key message of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien, Thailand, was that investing in education is the single most effective way of achieving both accountably democratic governance and socio-economic development. Myers (2001) is in an article about diverse approaches to child labour referring to the "human capital", meaning capacities, attitudes and skills developed in children needed to contribute to economic development and to create prosperous adults.

There is in the labour market a distinction between the formal and informal sector. The legislation regulating child labour applies mostly to the formal sector. A lot of children, however, are involved in the informal sector. Internationally there is a common agreement on certain criteria identifying enterprises within informal sector. They are small or micro-scale; they avoid official regulations and they are low income and unproductive survival activities of a hand-to-mouth nature (Focus on Children at Risk, 2000). That means it is dominated by self-employment or family based activities. The number of people depending upon the urban informal sector as their main source of livelihood in Ethiopia is estimated to be between 1.4 and 1.7 million which is 79% of the total urban economically active population. I assume that students in my research are engaged in activities within this sector. Many might be engaged in work related to handicraft traditions as this is a dominant activity of the

area where my informants live. The skills related to these traditions may be assumed as important for the families of this culture to transfer to the next generation. Since people in this area live under low socio-economic conditions it may be that these students have to work to support their families economically.

A long-term goal is that children should not be obliged to work. Looking to the situation in Ethiopia where 85,5% of the child population in the age group 5-17 years are found to be involved in economic activities (MOLSA /CSA/ILO 2001) one understands that it will take a long time before that becomes reality. Until then one has to acknowledge that many children continue to work. This leads to the question of how to ensure that the education offers sufficient development opportunities in a learning- and teaching environment that is adapted to the needs of working students. Are the teachers educated to manage the diverse and individual needs of working students and to apply child-centred, active learning methodologies which will contribute to the quality of the school life of the students? The teachers represent one of several important dimensions in the lives of working children in the school. The next paragraph will focus on those dimensions I consider as important in this study.

1.5. Dimensions in the Lives of Working Students

In his book on the ecology of human development Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that all individuals are part of a social and cultural environment. Also the local communities with their social and economic structures are influential factors in this environment. In her work Rogoff (2003) states that human development is a cultural process. For understanding cultural aspects of human development she has through research developed some *orienting concepts* to guide thinking about how cultural processes contribute to human development. The overarching orienting concept is according to her that

“...humans develop through their participation in the socio-cultural activities of their communities, which also change” (Rogoff, 2003, p11).

In my research focus is on activities related to work and school. The community, in which this field research has been conducted, is well known for having a large number of school age children working alongside attending regular school.

Therefore, all of the students targeted in this study, perform some kind of work outside school. It may be in their homes or outside their homes, or both. An important question is then whether it is possible to have a good quality of school life in combination with working. Another question that arises is how the students themselves perceive the work they are doing. Is the work something they are forced to do, is it harmful in any way or does it develop useful skills? Do they simply work because they according to their tradition should help their parents or do they have to assist in order to contribute economically?

Aside from exploring students' views on quality of their schooling and working conditions, the parents' opinions about the school life and working life of their children are also important. In what way do the parents influence on the school life of their children? So another major dimension in the lives of the students is the parents. In this area of Addis Ababa, many families are occupied within traditional handicraft activities such as weaving and pottery. This is an economically deprived area and most of the students are forced to work to assist their families. This taken into consideration the question arises in what way parents are able to contribute to create a good school life for their children. Do they allow their children to prioritize education? Do the parents cooperate with the school in order to be able to create good solutions for the students whenever some special needs arise? In educational policy guidelines the importance of participation from the community in order to achieve the goals set in education are emphasized. Hence parent - teacher associations are established to promote the quality of education. According to Abebech (2006) this association is not yet working efficiently for different reasons. One is that the parents do not have time to attend meetings because of their economic situation.

As already mentioned teachers represent another important dimension in the lives of the students. What do they know about the lives of their working students? In what

way do they meet the needs of this particular group of students? What is the role of the teacher and to what extent are they able to perform within the prevailing conditions and how important are they in creating good quality of school life for their students?

Finally there is the school as institution, which operates within a framework consisting of several aspects such as legislation and educational policy, economic and human resources, as well as physical, social and cultural factors. The school is, therefore, an institution that must be observed and comprehended in a larger context. I have already pointed out that the main focus of this study is the perspective of the students. Nevertheless, in order to understand what are the factors that influence students' school life, the experiences or meanings expressed by the students have to be placed in a context and be interpreted with regard to the existing educational conditions. Related to this it is my concern also to try to identify possible connections between the experiences of the students and the school as an institution of which they are a part. A main question in this connection is whether the frame factors are such that they contribute to good school life quality for the working students.

In summing up on this section, it is noteworthy that this study includes the following three aspects related to students' school life.

1. How is their school life?

Focus on the description of the students' own experiences

2. How do they perceive their school life?

Focus on the perception of the students' own experiences

3. What influences on their school life?

Focus on how work, parents, and school influence on their school life

1.6. The Objectives of the Study

Based on what is described above the aim and objectives of this study are developed as follows:

The aim of the study is:

- to contribute to knowledge development about quality of school life for working students in Ethiopia

The objectives of the study are to investigate:

- what kind of work 8th grade students do;
- students' own perception of their work;
- students' own perception of their school life;
- parents' perception of their children's life at school and work;
- teachers' perception of the students' life at school and work;
- the school's perception of the students' life at school and work;
- how school, work and parents influence on the school life of working students;

1.7. Significance of the Study

The study is presumed to be significant for educators, policymakers and researchers responsible for issues concerning working students and educational achievements.

In the light of the above said, the ambition is that this study shall:

- contribute to knowledge about quality of school life for working students;
- provide the school with information, which shall create awareness about the importance of having knowledge about the conditions of working students in order to enable the school to adapt educational practice to the needs of this group of students;
- provide knowledge to the educational authorities in Addis Ababa that might be useful in the planning of Special Needs Education;

- provide knowledge about quality of school life for working students to the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia;
- provide knowledge about quality of school life to other countries with similar conditions related to working children and education;
- provide knowledge to non-governmental organizations and to other nations that work globally on the issue of education and working children.

1.8. Ethiopia: Background Information

Coming to Ethiopia one is struck by the beauty, the contrasts and the diversity of its nature and its ethnicity. The topographic features of Ethiopia range from the highest peak at Rasdashen, which is 4.450 meters above sea level, down to Afar Depression, which is 110 meters below sea level (Belay, 2004). There are the lush highlands and southern jungles in great contrast to the desert areas prone to drought. Ethiopians bristle at their international reputation associated with famine. Ethiopia is so much more.

The diversity in ethnicity is another significant characteristic of Ethiopia. There are about 90 ethnic groups speaking 83 languages (Wakene, 2002). They all have their culture and their native traditions. This diversity is exciting and spectacular, but is also a challenge when it comes to the governing of the society.

According to UN (2005) the population in Ethiopia is about 74.2 million. About 85% of the population lives in rural areas and their main source of income is agriculture. During the recent years, the country has experienced shortage in food production, and farming families cannot produce enough to live on. Some move from the countryside to the urban areas to find employment (Amin, 1996). Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, is characterized by diversity and contrasts. The population increases as people move into the city hoping to find a job, and is now estimated to about 4,2 million. This is according to unofficial information from Tekolla Tatek. A national census is going to be held in 2007.

1.8.1. Historical and Political Background

Ethiopians look back on three thousand years of unbroken history as a nation and they are proud of it. This historical entity called Ethiopia is one of the oldest state formations still existing in the world (Polhua, 2004). Its early history, including the period before and when the state was centred around Aksum, and extending up to the end of the thirteenth century, is rather obscure. The peoples living in the area of what is today called Ethiopia spoke different languages and professed different religions. Some adhered to Christianity, others to islam and perhaps most had their own animistic religions. From the end of the thirteenth century AD the Christian state which achieved hegemony, was led by a dynasty who claimed descent from a liaison between King Solomon of Israel and the biblical Queen of Sheba. The period was characterised by warrior kings who constantly moved around to conquer new territories. From 1855 it is possible to see a gradual and almost uninterrupted attempt to build a strong state-apparatus which slowly expanded in space and depth to cover what is today known as Ethiopia. It is Africa's oldest independent country, and with the exception of a five year occupation by Mussolini's Italy, it has never been colonised. It is stated in CSA report (2000) that Ethiopia was ruled by successive emperors and kings until 1974. From that year until 1991 the country was ruled by the Dergs - a military government. In 1991 the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took over. The Ethiopian state was from 1855 until 1991 characterised by strong centralisation. In 1991 many expected this centralisation process to be reversed. That also partly happened as the government established ethnic federalism under ethnically defined states. Each of the states uses the majority language for both administrative and educational purposes. The process of decentralisation has, however, been complicated by the fact that only 10% of the revenue is generated by the states and as much as 90% comes from the federal government (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for the educational policy of Ethiopia. There are nine regional states and each of them has its own Education

Bureau (EB). The EB in Addis Ababa is on City Government level. Within Addis Ababa there are 10 sub-cities and each of them has Educational Departments. The next administrative level is the Kebele where there are educational team leaders. Powers and duties of the central and regional executive organs of the Government are defined in the Proclamation No. 41 of 1993.

During the period since 1991 the third national election was held in May 2005. Controversies relating to the votes counting process and allegations of fraud led to post-electoral violence in June and November 2005 with people being killed and wounded, and political and civil society leaders being arrested. I was in Addis Ababa doing my field study for this research the days in November when violence occurred in the streets in different parts of the town. In the area where the school is situated as well as in the area where I resided there were violent incidents in the streets between people and police. During this period the school was closed so it was not possible to conduct any interviews with my informants. People were also given the advice to stay indoors as it was considered too dangerous to move outside in the streets. To what extent this may have affected my research will be discussed in a later chapter related to validity.

1.8.2. Socio-economic Background

Ethiopia is among the economically most disadvantaged countries in the world. The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is \$110 (World Bank, 2004). This is one of the reasons why there are a lot of working children in the country. According to Michel Gozo, the head of UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Ethiopia, the number of children engaged in economic activities aged below 14 is estimated to 7.5 million. These children work for different reasons, which are mentioned in a previous section.

The students that this research focuses on mostly live in low income families being girls and boys from 14 – 17 years old. They live with both parents, they attend school and they all work in addition to attending regular schooling, either in household

activities or in productive activities or both. This is a common phenomenon in Ethiopia. In the Child Labour Survey Report (MOLSA, CSA and ILO, 2001) statistics indicate that 34% of the total child population in Ethiopia aged 5-17 years were doing some work in addition to attending school. That is 6.218.723 out of a total of 18.183.432 children. The proportion of children attending school is higher in the urban areas compared to the rural areas. The concentration of schools is high in the medium and large cities where only 15% of the population resides. The vast majority of the rural population has little access to education that in turn leads to low enrolment rates. From a total number of 2.413.032 children in the urban areas 80% attend school. In rural areas the percentage is 31,7% out of a total of 15.770.400 children. If we look at the number of children attending school in urban areas the figure is 1.935.226. The survey reveals that from this number the proportion of children attending school and working is 80.8%. In Addis Ababa the respective percentage is 68,3%.

The main reason given for taking part in working activities is to assist the household enterprise or to support the household income. From the above mentioned survey 39% responded that work affects their schooling, while 61% said it did not. Children in Addis Ababa were the least affected (22%). My study investigates in more detail how work may influence on the school life of working students and hence affect the quality of their school life.

1.8.3. Education in Ethiopia

Education has a long tradition in Ethiopia through the ancient Orthodox Church offering education of boys. Modern education started with the first societal modernisation project initiated by Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913) and developed further in the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie (1913-1974). According to Tekeste Negash (1990) the year 1926, can be seen as the beginning of establishment of a national educational system since a special educational tax was then introduced. The main purpose was to educate for emerging tasks within modern military and civil

services as well as international communication, with English and other foreign languages as important components. From 1963 Amharic replaced English as medium of instruction.

Under the so called Derg regime from 1974 – 1991, there were attempts to expand education through a literacy campaign which was combined with building of new schools. This emphasis on quantity resulted, however, in declining quality, partly due to the increased number of students in the class, and the system of shifts was introduced meaning that the students had shorter school days (Poluha, 2004).

Throughout the twentieth century official educational policy were inspired by different external models, such as British, North American and Soviet education. In 1991 The Transitional Government of Ethiopia inherited an educational system with about 9000 government, private, missionary, Church and Koran schools. (Johnsen & Alemayhu, 2006)

In 1990 the policy makers in Ethiopia were committed pursuing universal access to primary education by the year 2000 (UNESCO 1991, Education for All), and renewed their commitment during the World Education Forum in Dakar (UNESCO, 2000). The present government of Ethiopia introduced the New Education and Training Policy in 1994 out of which the Education Sector Development Programme grew (ESDP). This programme aims at improving quality of education and expanding access to basic primary education. The educational authorities have the objective to reach universal primary enrolment in schools by the year 2015. According to the Minister of Education H.E. Dr. Sintayehu W/ Michael the enrolment rate at the primary level has reached 89,14% (MOE, 2006). This has been achieved by increasing the number of students in the class as well as building new schools and constructing additional classrooms. New teachers are also trained and recruited. Coverage of primary education as measured by enrolment in grades 1-8 has expanded at an average annual rate of growth of 11,3% during 1998/99 – 2002/03. This is according to the Report on Development of Education in Ethiopia to UNESCO (2004).

The idea of universal access to primary education is also reflected in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (OAU, 1999). Furthermore, it is also important to note that this charter takes into consideration the virtues of the cultural heritage, historical background and values of the African civilization.

Since providing basic education for all has been a pronounced aim in the national educational policy of Ethiopia since 1994 (TGE, 1994), all children, with and without disabilities and special needs, are included in the huge national task of developing educational possibilities in all parts of Ethiopia. This task requires professional skills in adapting the education to the plurality of different individual needs in the diverse population of students. In the Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) one objective is to provide an introduction to teacher training for special education in the regular teacher training programmes. To meet the needs of EFA (1990) the MOE has developed a strategy for special needs education (MOE, 2006).

As mentioned the aim of giving every child the opportunity to attend primary school requires new school buildings. In Addis Ababa 6500 new classrooms were about to be built in the autumn of 2005 and in the sub city where the research school is situated 15 new buildings were under construction with 375 classrooms. Altogether there are 35 primary schools in the Sub-City (government, private and others). This is according to the Education and Training Department of the Sub-City. The aim is to organise the schools into one-shift system. It has been common to have two shifts per day in order to enrol as many students as possible. That means that one half of the students attend from 8am to 12.30pm and the next half from 1pm to 5pm. At the school where I conduct my research the total number of students in the year 2005/2006 is 2661. There are 69 teachers and 19 employed in the administration.

Eight years of primary education is divided into two cycles. In the first cycle, from class one to four, one teacher has the responsibility of the class in all subjects in the so-called self-contained classroom, and all pupils are automatically promoted from class to class without repetition (Alemayehu, 2000; Belew, 2005; MOE/FINNIDA, 1993). The rationale behind is that with one teacher it is possible to follow up the

students and give continuous assessment and to give care and support to every individual student. From grade five to eight every class has one home room teacher responsible for the class whereas there are different teachers teaching in the different subjects.

The new education policy requires an increased number of educated, skilled professionals. According to the Ethiopian education standard, the first cycle primary education requires teachers with minimum qualification of Teacher Training Institute certificate (TTI) which is one year after the completion of 10 years of general education. Similar, Teacher Training College Diploma (TTC) is required for second cycle teachers which is two years of education after high school completion (10 years). Compared to European standards one may raise the question if this is enough in order to reach the aims of the policy which are to improve the academic qualifications, the methodological approaches and the ethical values of the teachers.

1.9. A Primary School in a District of Addis Ababa – the Voice of the Researcher

In the above section a general overview is given of the educational system in Ethiopia. This section represents a personal narrative story about a common school day in a primary school located in one of the districts of Addis Ababa. This is based on my own informal observation as I before and during the data collection spent much time at the school as well as in the neighbourhood. I considered this as important for several reasons. First of all I wanted to get acquainted with the administration, the teachers and the students of the school. Secondly, I wanted the school to get used to my presence. The third reason is that this gave me the opportunity to “feel” the culture of the school and also that of the local society as I was visiting in some of the homes.

Coming to the school in the morning, if you are early enough, you will have the opportunity to join in the flag ceremony. Most probably there will also be given some

information or message from the school administration, or from one of the students engaged in the Minimedia¹. However, students are still entering through the school gate after 8 am. They are then considered to be latecomers and they are not allowed into the class until the first session of 40 minutes is over. The students and the teacher do not want anyone to interrupt and disturb while they are working. The vice-principal and the unit leader are collecting all the latecomers who will be told how important education is, and that they have to come on time. The students themselves have probably been up for some time already in order to help at home before they leave for school. While waiting some of the students is given working tasks in the garden keeping the flowers and vegetables nurtured. However, there are not so many vegetables now as last time I visited the school. Anyhow it is a nice school yard with big, beautiful trees giving shelter from the strong sun.

It is the dry season of the year and the dust is in the air when all the pupils come out for a break at 10 am. The sound from the voices of more than 1000 students is an experience worthy of mention. In such lively environment, one can wonder what the children are doing. What are they occupied with? Some of them are talking, and perhaps discussing their assignments. Some did not manage to do their homework so they have to finish that and they also might need some help from a peer. I see some girls skip rope while others play football, mostly boys as everywhere else, of course. The sports field is a bit reduced in size these days because of materials stored there for the construction of new buildings giving the school many new classrooms. That will bring an end to the shift system. All the students will then get the opportunity to attend school for the whole day, which until now only has been the case for grades 7 and 8. Parents have also contributed to these new developments - those who can afford it. One of the students told me she was so happy that she was able to contribute to the development of the school.

¹ Minimedia is a school program in which the students participate voluntarily. They produce messages and writings which are presented to the students every morning at the flag ceremony.

Meeting the school staff there is a lot of handshaking and hugs. It is the Ethiopian way. That is very nice. I am invited for tea - the best one - with spices, a lot of sugar and lime. But I notice something before I enter into the staff room. On the wall in front of the room, the following is written about the teacher:



“The Good Teacher”

As a teacher you should always be reminded of your role.

Entering into the room from the bright sunlight it appears dark, but my eyes soon get used to it. The walls are painted light blue. One of them is covered by the teachers' cupboards where they have their books and different teaching materials and their white overcoats. For a short moment they remind me of some health personnel. Some sit with a pile of sheets. It is probably some test that has to be marked. Some just sit relaxing or others are talking with their colleagues. They are lined up along the walls. The TV is on – loud – an English speaking programme. That is good practice for the teachers and they really need to improve their English. It is decided they should speak English every Wednesday, but alas, how easy to switch over to the mother tongue.

It is lunch break and I am invited to share injera² and some wot³ with a couple of colleagues. But first there is the hand-washing ceremony. One must have clean hands at least the right one as that is the one used for eating. As I am surrounded by teachers

² A fluffy round “bread” made from the Ethiopian grain called *teff*. It is served on a big plate and covered with different wots and /or vegetables.

³ Sauces where the main ingredients are oil, spices and different kinds of meat or vegetables.

I am soon managing the skill of wrapping wot or the vegetables into the injera and then into the mouth. Ahh !! it is spicy, but very tasty.

The break is over. I notice one of the students is coming to guide one of the blind teachers to his class. That's nice – I can “see” the helpful student.

Entering into one of the classrooms I find myself face to face with 60-65 students. Three boys or three girls sit close together at each desk. Some of the desks are empty so perhaps there used to be several students in the class earlier, or perhaps some are absent. It is after lunch break so some students did not return. They probably have to stay home in order to assist their parents with some kind of work. Anyhow, to me it seems crowdy - and there is a lot of noise, of course. What a challenge for the teacher. I am not allowed to be seated on one of those empty desks as they are covered by dust so I am invited to sit beside one of the students which I immediately accept of course. I feel included.

Eventually it becomes silent and the teacher gives his instructions. Some students may have questions and the teacher calls the students by their names. Good, isn't it, and how important to know their names. The teacher encourages them to participate. They have their exercise books open. They have to fill in some open spaces or answer questions. Before reaching this step, they have gone through a chapter in their textbooks. It is done by the teacher who has written a lot of notes on the blackboard, which also has to be written by the students in their notebooks. The textbook is the “source of knowledge” as one of my students said.

They have prepared a role-play for the international AIDS-day so they need to rehearse. The students like it and they look proud. Of course it is exciting to have a visitor in the audience – even a foreigner.

I wonder how many of these students that have some kind of work out of school. And what kind of work would they have? I have already made an appointment with two of the teachers to guide me around in the surroundings of the school where the students live. So one morning we leave for our excursion in the neighbourhood of the school.

It is immediately obvious that weaving is the predominant activity of this area. Walking along the street there are hanks of yarn hanging in rows, some white – they have probably been bleached - and some are all different colours. Outside on the wall of a house or in the trees or some other appropriate place a man is preparing the warp. We have finally come to the family's house of one of the teachers. They are running a family business and everybody is involved. Coming inside father and son are occupied with weaving a beautiful piece of cloth. This is going to be a shawl. And they have many that are going to be taken to the market which is twice a week. Weaving is males' work. They are sitting on the floor at the loom with their feet into a hole in the ground, and the sound of the shuttle is like a swish quickly back and forth. Women are doing the spinning and they are the ones who wash the hanks of yarn.

Outside some houses there are pots – small and big – lined up. We are allowed to enter inside a house. In Ethiopia we always seem to be welcome inside. Imagine such hospitality. There is a young woman sitting on the floor making coffeepots. She is about to finish one. It takes about half an hour to make one so she has already produced some. They are going to be burnt in an oven afterwards. She only has the decoration left which she carefully performs with a skilled and steady hand. Outside the clay is lying in the sun to dry. The clay was fetched early in the morning by the men some distance away at the foot of the mountain.

Some of the teachers have told us these handicraft activities are low status work. Some are even ashamed of it and do not want to tell about it. How come that producing such wonderful pieces of cloth, which is something that everyone is wearing, is looked upon as low status?

I have read in the educational policy papers that development of local culture is one cardinal principle. The teachers also tell me that they emphasize the importance of keeping alive the culture and the local traditions of the area. They tell their students to be proud of these handicrafts. That makes me happy. They also say that even the authorities facilitate for establishing of centres for weaving and pottery.

Arriving just inside the gate at the school there is a new house where they will teach weaving both in the old, traditional way and with modern equipment. The products will be sold and give some income to the charity club which support those who cannot afford to buy study material. What a nice way both to raise awareness about their local traditions that contributes to giving them positive identity and something to be proud of and at the same time they contribute to help their fellow students. Immediately inside the school compound the students come running towards us smiling and trying their best to express a few words in English. I wish I could have been able to talk with them in their native language.

1.10. Background and Role of the Researcher

After 20 years of practicing as teacher in lower secondary school in a rural community in the south east part of Norway I changed role to being a student of an international Master-programme of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo. I have been joining a group of students coming from different parts of the world, most of them from African countries. Attending this programme gave me the opportunity to get to know people representing different cultures.

My wish was to be able to do my research in Ethiopia as I had already been there two times. This became possible due to the fact that the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo and the Addis Ababa University cooperate in a project on research, innovation and post-graduate competence building in special needs education (NUFU 35/2002).

This opportunity prompted me to reflect upon a few things: my own experience as a teacher in Norway and coming to a different culture and conduct research there. First, it became important for me to reflect upon my own experiences as a teacher and to be aware of the development of educational policies in my own society and of the values on which those are based.

Secondly, I was concerned about how to meet a different culture as a researcher. I was at the beginning of my research journey and was engaged in the pursuit of knowledge about educational experiences and phenomenon that interest me. My idea has been to be open-minded, curious and take the role as an active learner in the research process. My belief is also that awareness and knowledge about my own community makes it easier to meet a different culture without preconceived ideas. It has been important not to take the role as any “expert” knowledge holder, but be aware that my “personal” knowledge: my feelings, perceptions and beliefs would affect my research. This is further discussed in the section about validity in chapter 3.

Thirdly, I reflected upon my position as an outsider.

“Outsiders are newcomers to the meaning system, with limited understanding of how practices fit together and how they have developed from prior events” (Rogoff, 2003).

I have been visiting Ethiopia two times and have just a slight idea about the society and no deep knowledge and understanding about it. This puts me into a situation that makes me take up an attitude of humbleness. Outsiders may be met differently by the local society. In my case I was met by interest, helpfulness and hospitality and a positive attitude to my research. I experienced that all my interviewees were willing to contribute to my research by giving rich information.

Rogoff (2003) discusses the position of the “insider” and the “outsider”.

Where the researcher attempts to represent the participants’ or the insider’s perspective they take an emic approach. This is usually done by direct observation and participation in the activities of the community. When taking the viewpoint of an outsider we talk about an etic approach where researchers often maintain their own perspective as investigators of the phenomenon. This distinction in emic and etic approach is offered by John Berry (1969;1999) and is applied to cultural research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of this research. Appropriate theories as well as previous research supporting the study are discussed.

This research focuses on the phenomenon of school life quality conducted among 8th grade students in a district in Addis Ababa that is characterized by many children working to support their families economically. One intention of this study is to give descriptions of the students' experiences and their perception of their school life which creates the bases for developing the concept of school life quality. From previous research about school life quality I will in this chapter present and discuss the research conducted by Reidun Tangen (1998) "*Skolelivskvalitet på særvilkår*" (School Life Quality on Special Conditions). This is the only study I found about school life quality based on students' own experiences. Previous research related to working students will also be presented. These are related to countries in the south conducted in similar environments as mine.

The study further aims at investigating the influence of work, parents, teachers and the school as an institution on the school life of the students and hence on the quality of their school life. Related to this, the chapter discusses Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory emphasising the role of interaction, environment and culture on the development of the human being. This model is relevant as it offers a set of interrelated concepts that are helpful for understanding the interaction between students, their work, their parents, their school life, the school and the society of which they are a part.

The research also focuses on seeing the experiences and the perceptions of the students in a frame of understanding which I call the educational conditions. I have found Johnsen's (2001) Model: *Curricula for the Plurality of Individual Learning*

Needs appropriate to use because this is a model encompassing a number of important aspects of the educational conditions necessary to create a good quality of the students' school life. Among the aspects of this model frame factors is one which includes legislation, economic and human resources in addition to a number of physical, social and cultural aspects. The school is an institution which depends upon and operates within this framework of factors.

Finally I have included Rye's eight principles from his ICDP programme (2001) which focuses on positive interaction between caregiver and child. I found this relevant for my study because the aspects of care and communication are basic qualities in his model. The principles are not only applicable to caregiver and child but may be applied also to interaction between teacher- student and parent - teachers.

2.2. Previous Research

2.2.1. Research on School Life Quality

The use of the concept "school life quality" is taken from the above mentioned doctoral thesis by Reidun Tangen (1998). She focuses on students with special needs in their first year in upper secondary school. The aim is to describe the students' experiences of the transition from lower secondary to upper secondary school and then to develop a theory of school life quality grounded in the given data. My research is conducted under very different conditions and with a different group of students. However, I am inspired by the approach she has used in her study. It is "the meaningful experiences" of the students that Tangen seeks to reveal in her study. Thus my research is also based on students' experiences.

Her research presents four dimensions which are developed based on the analysis of the positive and negative experiences of the students and their perspectives on their school life and which are assumed to be important in the understanding of the

concept *quality of school life*. The perspective of the student is still kept, but these dimensions represent a systematized understanding. They are the following:

1. Dimension of Time

Time is a basic dimension in the lives of human beings. Its dimension is circular in the sense that the past is viewed and understood here and now in the present in the light of the future and vice versa.

2. Control of one's own Schooling/School Life

This is related to the perception of having the opportunity to influence on one's own school life. These perceived opportunities are linked to the educational conditions offered to the students.

3. Relations to Others

The importance of the relation between the student and the teacher and between the students themselves is considered as being an important dimension.

4. Dimension of Work (Content)

This dimension is related to the work they do within different subjects and the students' perception of the "work" they do at school as something positive.

The above four dimensions do not function as definitions of the concept *school life quality*. The concept is viewed as a senzitory concept rather than a defintory (Blumer, 1954 in Tangen, 1998). The reason lies in the fact that focus in her research is on life quality as a subjective concept; that is to say on the informants' own experiences and perceptions.

Even if the main focus is on the subjective concept of school life quality the researcher has also viewed the experiences of the students within a frame of understanding which indicates some external or objective dimensions in the lives of the students. This is to go beyond the empirical data of the students' subjective experiences which is the bases for the development of the concept of school life quality. It is, however, in my interest to reveal and understand possible connections

between the experiences of the school life of working students and the school as an institution of which they are a part. In order to do so data from the teachers, the two principals and from the students and their parents will be analysed related to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and Johnsen's curriculum model. Before describing these two models some research on working students considered as relevant for my research will be presented.

2.2.2. Research on Working Students and Education

I have found no research related to school life quality of working children conducted in Ethiopia or other countries in the south. There is, however, much international research within child labour related topics. In the following I present three different research papers relevant for my own research.

1. *How Children See Their World* (Pineda, 1997)

This study is considered as being relevant for my research as its perspective is from the children's point of view. The students' own experiences as well as the target group of the study are similar to mine as they are working students. The intention of the study is to search for ways in which children will have greater possibilities of developing their potential based on the contributions from the children themselves. This is an exploratory study conducted among working students and full-time students in Nicaragua and has the title *How Children See Their World* (1997).

The study identifies differences in the representation of reality as experienced by the different groups in accordance with their social and economic status. For the working children education represents the hope that their lives could change while for full-time students who do not work school is a place where they learn new things.

The study indicates that working children do not necessarily suffer when they work, as more than half of the working children state that they like working. One fourth of them said they feel more important and useful because of work. As discussed in this research work has become an important part of their lives and in spite of the

disadvantages that work may have on children in terms of their social, emotional and cognitive development, the findings reveal that children are more tied to their work than anticipated.

One conclusion made is that work may not be damaging in itself to the development of children. The issue is to determine at what point the work is too much for what a child of a certain age is able to handle and to see when work impedes the development of other potential strengths the child has, not only intellectually and academically at school, but also in terms of their participation in other groups, social contexts and activities. Related to my research it is important to identify the students' own perception of when work is too much and at what point it may influence on their school life quality.

2. A Study on Child Labour in the Informal Sector in Woreda 2, Addis Ababa
(FOCUS on Children at Risk, 2000)

This Ethiopian study is conducted among working children between 12 and 18 years employed in the informal sector. They do work such as running errands, working as domestics, tailors, assisting in metal and wood shops, garages, bars and hotels. I find this to be relevant for my research as it is the same age group engaged within a similar environment in Addis Ababa. Many of them live with their families and combine learning and earning. The study aims at identifying and describing the background and working conditions for working children/adolescents.

Findings from the study shows that those who do not like work states reasons such as low payment, long working hours, exploitative and unkind supervision, and unpleasant customers and employers.

Among the reasons for liking to work the children mention that work has improved their life conditions or helps them to survive, it has been able to learn and advance in their studies by combining learning and working. They say work makes them self confident and optimistic about the future, that the employers are kind to them and think community has a positive attitude to them. However, it was found that the

students themselves as well as their parents and their employers were unaware of their rights and duties.

Interventions are suggested towards five groups: the working children, parents, employers, the general public, and the Woreda and Kebele administration focusing on education and awareness raising in addition to establishing community groups and Kebele administration bodies to monitor child labour. In my study it will be important to identify what school offers working students and to what extent they cooperate with other institutions in the community.

3. Child Labour and Emotional Disorders in an Urban Area, Ethiopia: A Rapid Assessment on Community Perception of Child Labour (Daniel Fekadu, Atalay Alem, 2001).

This is a study involving institutions to which the child is closely connected and as such responsible for their well-being and also part of the children's life. This study is relevant for my research as it aspires to identify to what extent the community is aware of the nature of child labour. What especially makes it interesting for my study is the role of the school and the parents and to what extent they cooperate for the best interest of the students. Among the respondents are teachers in primary and junior secondary level and principals, students, public service providers and government officers as well as house wives.

The objectives of this study was 1) to assess community awareness of the nature of child labour and its extent, 2) to learn what the respondents thought were major types of child labour and the driving elements behind, and 3) to identify perceived problems associated with child labour.

The results of the study showed that there is knowledge about child labour existing in the community and that it is perceived as a major social problem. The most common types of child labour identified were domestic work, different kinds of work in the street and in private enterprises. The main perceived reasons for becoming a child worker were economic reasons, family issues and lack of education.

Suggested intervention areas included poverty alleviation, provision of free education and raising community awareness.

2.3. Theory

2.3.1. Urie Bronfenbrenner – The Ecology of Human Development

My study focuses on students in different interrelated contexts, the most important being school, family and work. As all individuals are part of a social and cultural environment and we learn and develop within this context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) I have found Bronfenbrenner's model *The Ecology of Human Development* to be relevant for my study. It is a contextual model which is concerned with understanding the broad range of biological, physical and socio-cultural settings and how they affect development. It is of particular interest in my study to identify how context influence on the school life quality of the students. The child is influenced by parents, peers, relatives and other adults with whom it comes in contact. Related to my research focus is on parents and teachers. But also the circumstance that they all have work outside school must be assumed to affect their school life. It is long recognized that children live in vastly different circumstances and these differences can have dramatic influence on development. Even the immediate family in which the child lives is subject to enormous variation. Number of siblings, economic resources, space and privacy, independence, and emotional atmosphere are among the vast assortment of factors that vary in the immediate surroundings of children. However, differences in the contexts of development extend far beyond a child's immediate family. Physical surroundings, access to school, job opportunities, culture and local traditions, political systems, war, as well as political priorities influence the way children are reared.

Bronfenbrenner developed an ecological model for understanding these social and environmental influences and his belief is that development must be studied in the homes as well as in the schools, neighbourhoods and communities where it takes

place and that development is influenced by experiences arising from these different social and cultural systems as well as the child's immediate surroundings.

Bronfenbrenner describes the environment as that of the learning being to exist at several different but interrelated levels conceptualized as a series of concentric rings. These systems are referred to as the *microsystem*, the *mesosystem*, the *exosystem* and the *macrosystem*.

In the centre of the circle is the child with its biological and psychological makeup, including also its cognitive capacities and socio emotional and motivational propensities for responding to and acting on the environment. The focus in this study will be on the student in the centre and the influence of the work they do, their parents and the school and the interrelationship between these settings in addition to the educational conditions and legislation on education and child work. This ecological principle (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) has the advantage of drawing attention to the impact on students of relationships between micro systems on the meso system level (e.g. between work and parents, work and school or parents and school) as well as to broader influences at exo and macro system levels (e.g. cultural beliefs, traditions or legislation). The different levels of the model are described in the following:

1. *The microsystem* is comprised by the settings that have the most immediate and direct impact on the child in the centre. Referring to this study these settings will include the parents of the students and the work they do at home or outside home as well as their educational circumstances – being their classmates, their teachers and school environment. The microsystem comprises

“the activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p15).

It is worth mentioning that the student might move in and out of these different systems, new might come up or one might disappear.

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2. *The mesosystem* includes the many interrelationships among the different settings within the microsystem and in which the child is directly involved. Parents' attitudes to education and to child work as well as the parents' socio-economic situation may affect on the school life of their children and on their success in school. The school's awareness of their working students - or lack of such – may influence also on their educational achievement and on their learning and development. Another important aspect is the interaction between the parents and the school and lastly how the connection is between the work that the parents have and the work of the students.
 3. *The exosystem* is made up by wider systems such as social, economic, political or religious settings in which the child is not personally involved. These different settings may, however, influence on the development of the child as they directly bear on those who interact with the child. This level includes the major institutions of the society such as school. Political decisions made will have impact on the school as an institution as they may be important frame factors in creating a good school life for the students.
 4. Finally the social, political, and economic conditions mentioned above are themselves influenced by general beliefs and attitudes shared by members of the society. This broader context embracing all others is *the macrosystem*. This system helps design the social structures and activities of the lower and more concrete levels. It helps us for instance to define goals for education or ways of raising the next generation or what are standards of good life quality. This system will also include ceremonies, customs and traditions shared by a cultural group. Cultural beliefs about childrearing, about the role of school and about education and child work, and ethical and moral conventions of a society affect the child and its development.

2.3.2. The Curriculum Relation Model

As mentioned in the previous chapter school is one setting of which the child is a part and considered as important in the development of the child. I have chosen to use the

Curriculum Relation Model (Johnsen, 2001) when discussing how school influence on the life of working students. There are several aspects presented in this model considered as important in order to obtain quality of education and a good school life for the students. This model is meant to serve as a tool and the intention behind it is to focus on educational aspects that need to be considered in planning, practising and evaluating individually adapted education in the inclusive classroom. However, this model is a suitable frame not only for individual students, but also for groups and for whole classes and for the school. The different aspects of the model are the student(s), communication, care, assessment and evaluation, content, strategies, methods and organisation, intentions and frame factors among which the following are focused on in this study:

The student is the main agent in focus in this model. Its cultural and social background expressed through experiences, knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as its capacities and possibilities have to be seen in the relation to the education he or she is a part of.

Communication is a skill built on knowledge and human sensitivity and without communication there will be no education. Communication is a core concept and it is thought that language and communication are essential tools in learning and cognitive development. It is further stated that parents, teachers and peers may function as mediators and discourse partners in joint teaching and learning processes. These are particularly important in my research.

In his ICDP programme (International Child Development Programme) Rye (2001) has developed the communication and mediation aspects. According to him care is also important in teacher and student interaction. This will be described later in this chapter.

Like communication ***care*** represents an extended professional understanding going beyond the education only focusing on knowledge and skills. In my study I consider the teacher as a key person in the life of the students. As teachers we have to be

aware of the whole child seen in its social and cultural context and everyone with its own individual history. The challenge for the teacher is to consider how to show care both in the everyday situations as well as in the classroom. As Befring (2001) discusses from a special needs perspective care and learning are complementary functions.

The last aspect to be mentioned is *frame factors*. The school as institution depends upon and operates within a framework consisting of several factors. In my research these are referred to as educational conditions. Legislation which is already mentioned is one, others are economy, professional quality, and finally physical and social and cultural frame factors.

2.3.3. Henning Rye - ICDP Programme

As mentioned in the previous section care and communication are two aspects of the curricular model and considered as basic in creating a good teaching and learning environment. The same aspects are likewise basic qualities in Rye's ICDP programme (International Child Development Programmes) which identifies a number of aspects or qualities that comprise interaction. The basic quality of this program lies in eight guiding principles that are designed to encourage self-observation, recognition, exploration and further development of the caregiver by focusing on positive interaction between caregiver and child.

The program is based on the idea that when problems arise intervention can start by focusing on the caregiver. However, these guiding principles may very well be applied to school age children. This is what makes this program relevant to my study. My research involves students, parents and teachers and in this program lies a potential for improvement as well as for creating consciousness about the importance of a good relationship between teacher – student, student - student and parent – teacher. The principles are based on the assumption that teachers and parents, as well as other caregivers, can become more conscious about the importance of their own role in positive communication, interaction and mediation with students. In my study

interaction between teacher and student is of particular interest as I assume that to be an important factor related to good school life quality.

One of the most important requirements for students to thrive in school, learn, and develop socially and emotionally, is that they feel secure and enjoy being at school and in the classroom. This depends on positive interaction between teacher and student. International research has been conducted on the significance of authoritarian⁴ and authoritative⁵ attitudes in child-rearing. This research illustrates the importance of the quality of interaction in the school. Particularly the authoritative attitude, which is characterized by the adult being a good example for the child brings about positive results (Rye, 2001, p. 96). These attitudes are reflected in the ICDP programme. In a project in Denmark the eight guiding principles were systematically applied to teacher-student interaction in a local school. They were reformulated and are as follows:

1. Demonstrate positive feelings
2. Adapt to the students
3. Talk to the students
4. Give praise and acknowledgements
5. Help the students focus their attention
6. Give meaning to the students' experiences
7. Elaborate and explain
8. Help the students achieve self-discipline

The eight guiding principles may be looked upon as a tool for the teachers to develop good relationship with the students. For the students to enjoy school they are not only dependent on a positive teacher – student interaction, but also on the quality of the student – student interaction. Thus the principles can be used to promote the

⁴ “**Authoritarian**” refers to a style of upbringing based on instruction and commanding rather than mutual understanding and collaboration.

⁵ “**Authoritative**” refers to the adult being a good example for the child, showing clearly his or her understanding, values and standing as reflected in daily life

development of a positive classroom environment. Further they may be applied in the effort to establish a good cooperative relationship or rather a partnership with the parents. School exists in order to meet the children's needs for learning and development which should take place in close cooperation with parents and the home environment.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Method

3.1.1. Choice of Approach

As already stated the ultimate aim of this study is to contribute to knowledge development about the quality of school life of working students in Ethiopia. Further the objectives are to investigate what kind of work the students do and how they themselves perceive their life at school and at work. In addition focus is extended to how parents, teachers and the school perceive the life of their working students related to school and work and how they may influence on the quality of their school life.

The main focus of this study is to listen to the voice of the students themselves and let them describe their own experiences seen from their perspective. The consequence of taking this perspective is that the researcher emphasizes the importance of the students own way of expressing themselves, their own explanations and their own way to view their “reality”. This approach has the characteristics of a phenomenological study. In order to get data about this topic I need to go in depth and get descriptions that are rich on information. I need students to share their experiences and describe their life at school and at work, who are able to express their perceptions about what they experience. This taken into consideration the students have to be the main informants of this study.

As seen from the objectives the research also aims at investigating how the work, their parents, teachers and the school as institution influence on the quality of their school life. Hence the parents, teachers and the school’s principal will add to the students’ subjective descriptions as they all are important in the lives of the students.

I need informants in their natural settings which means I will have to meet the students at school, at home and in the environment of their work. Gathering material from the parents involves going to their homes. I choose to have few informants and collect data through in depth interviews. The collected information has afterwards to be analysed through reducing the large amount of data into themes or categories. Hence this research calls for a qualitative approach.

“Qualitative research is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct their social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and these constructions tend to be situational. The methodology consists of discovering the meanings and interpretations by studying cases intensively in their natural settings and by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction.” (Gall, Gall and Borg , 2002).

My research is not about studying cases, but the phenomenon school life quality. Among several research traditions within qualitative research phenomenology is one. The central focus of a phenomenology is on understanding a concept or a phenomenon. The main aim of this research is to get an understanding of the concept *quality of school life* for working children and do so by focusing on their own experiences related to how their school life quality may be influenced by school, work and parents. On the bases of this I have found phenomenology to be relevant for my study. Phenomenology has the following characteristics (Creswell, 1998):

- It studies how people experience a phenomenon
- The informants describe their everyday lived experiences
- The information is collected through interviews with a small number of informants
- The analysis of the findings follows certain procedures

3.1.2. The Philosophical Background of Qualitative Research.

Educational research involves different approaches. These are based on different philosophical assumptions that guide the studies and which speak of different ways of understanding knowledge (Creswell, 1998). The *ontological* assumption addresses the nature of reality. Reality is constructed by the individuals taking part in the

research. All involved have their own reality and the researcher needs to report these realities. Through the information I get from the informants every individual expresses its own experiences and its own reality, which is my task as researcher to report. I have to be aware of the fact that multiple realities exist. Apart from the realities of all the informants, in this study being the students, the parents, the teachers and the two principals, there is my reality as a researcher and also that one of the reader of the study. It is my aim to get a diversity of perspectives on the phenomenon of school life quality for working students. In the analysis of the material this diversity is shown through presenting quotes and themes and reports of multiple statements representing the diverse perspectives on school life quality. This is one characteristic of a phenomenological study.

Epistemological assumptions ask what the relationship is between the researcher and that being researched. In qualitative research the researcher interacts in different ways with the participants of the study. By applying in depth interviews I will as a researcher minimize the distance between myself and those being researched. Spending much time in the school and also visiting the students and parents at home brings me to the natural setting of the interviewees.

This close distance between me as a researcher and the informants has implications for the role of values in the study, referred to as *axiological* assumption. As a researcher I admit the value-laden nature of this study. Being a regular teacher with experience from secondary school in Norway has implications on the study. My task is for myself to be aware of my own background and to report about it to make the reader of this text aware of it. The information gathered from the field is also value-laden in its nature.

From these various distinctions about reality *methodological* assumptions emerge, which ask what the process of research is. Within qualitative research knowledge evolves, emerges and is tied to the context in which it is studied. The researcher works inductively, which means that he or she develops categories from the informants rather than having specified them in advance. In the analysing of the

collected information the individual statements of the interviewees about different topics are detailed before the next step which is moving to the meanings and clusters of meanings and ending up with a description of the phenomenon.

These assumptions have been investigated into by philosophers for centuries and led to the development of different schools. They have their scientific bases in post positivism which assumes that social reality is constructed by the individuals who participate in it (Gall et al., 2003). Based on this my study has its focus on the experiences of the informants themselves among whom the students are the main ones. In the next sub chapter the concept of experience will be discussed.

3.1.3. The Concept of Experience

According to the ontological assumption mentioned in the previous section every individual expresses its own experience and construct its own reality. Since this is in focus in this research I find it necessary to describe the concept of experience in more details. When the approach of this research is called phenomenological it means that this simple question is asked: *What is it like to have a certain experience?* (Van Manen, 1990, p 44-45). Phenomenology has different directions so I will explain my understanding and use of the concept. Theoretically the key of the concept “experience” is *meaning*. I am interested in what kind of meaning the students, the parents and the teacher attach to their experiences, to situations or to relations that is related to the students’ school life quality. What does school mean to them? How do they interpret their experiences?

In daily speech we talk about experience as something that has happened and that we are thinking about and reflecting on which implies to be aware of. This experience does not get meaning until it is actively reflected on. This claims the use of our memory. Lived experience gains its meaning only reflectively as past presence. This is in line with the phenomenological understanding which is focusing on the meaningful experience. The aim of the phenomenology is to transform lived experience to a textual expression, to be able to express the essence of lived

experience which is a quality that is acknowledged retrospectively (Van Manen, 1990, p.36). It is “the meaningful experiences” that Tangen (1998) seeks to reveal in her study. That is also what I aspire to do in my research.

3.2. Data Collection

Data collection is about gathering good information in order to answer the research questions. Collecting data is a process consisting of several interrelated activities (Creswell, 1998). It extends to more than conducting an interview or making observations. Among the several steps in the process one is to find people to study and to gain access and establish a good relationship so that the participants will provide good data. To determine a strategy for purposeful sampling of individuals and site is an interrelated step in the data collection process.

The school selected for my study is a primary school in Addis Ababa. The chosen school is part of a project between the University of Addis Ababa and the University of Oslo (NUFU 35/2002). Several field studies have been conducted here by students attending the international master programme in Special Needs Education at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo. This justified my choice to conduct my study in Ethiopia in spite of my Norwegian background.

The data collection is done among students in grade eight. I consider them to be my main informants. Additional informants are their parents, teachers teaching in grade 8 and the present and previous principal of the school. In addition to this I will collect information from two classes of grade 8.

For a phenomenological study the process of collecting information primarily involves in-depth interviews. In the following I am going more in detail into the different steps of the data collecting process.

3.2.1. Selection of Informants

My research requires information from students, parents, teachers and the school administration. I assume that they are all rich on information. The informants needed are all purposefully selected. In the following I give the rationale for the selection of informants. As this is a phenomenological study the most essential is that all participants experience the phenomenon. Creswell (1998) refers to this strategy of sampling as criterion sampling.

The Students. The group of students I focus on are all having work outside school. They are in grade 8 which is the last year of primary school. Students in that grade will probably know some English, however, not enough to conduct the interviews in English. Their knowledge in English will only make it possible to have simple conversations with them. For all the interviews with the students I therefore need a translator.

Another reason for selecting students from grade eight is that this is the last year of primary school and hence they have several years of experience. As I have also included in my interview questions about future plans I assume that to be relevant for grade 8 students.

There are five classes altogether in grade 8 with a total of 316 students. That means between 60 and 65 in each class. The selection of students for an in-depth interview is done from two of the five classes which are selected randomly. I found that all the classes are created according to the same criteria so hence a random selection of the two classes. For the two classes a questionnaire was developed, which was done for two reasons. First, it served as bases for selection of the students whom I needed for the in-depth interviews. Second, it would give background information about 8 grade students related to work and school. The questions were within the six following areas: General background information, family, school, work, spare time activities and future plans. Altogether there were 119 students answering the questionnaire. From this group I selected six students based on certain criteria which were gender,

they all have a mother and a father, they have some kind of work outside school, the kind of work they have, if they like or dislike the work they are doing and academic rank in class. I also included like or dislike school as a criterion. From the 119 students answering the questionnaire there were 55 who lived together with both mother and father. Out of these there were 52 who had some kind of work outside school. I asked about three categories of work:

- work at home
- work outside home
- work at home and outside home

I selected one boy and one girl from each category that I refer to as BS1-3 (Boy Student 1-3) and GS1-3 (Girl Student1-3). See Figure 1.

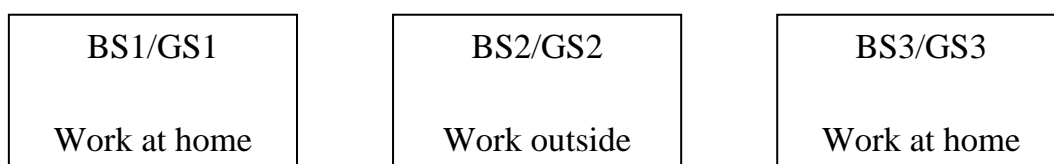


Figure 1: *Selection of Student Interviewees*

The Parents. The parents of the six students are the parent informants. The information from the parents gives me data on their perception related to their son's/daughter's life at school and work. They will give information about their opinions on the importance of school, their opinion about work, and how work influences on their school life.

I had planned to interview the mother and the father of each of the six students together. Getting awareness of the gender role pattern I discussed with my local adviser if it would be better to interview them separately. I was given the advice to do so because it was assumed that the father would be the dominant part and hence reducing the reliability. Interviewing all the parents separately would mean 12 interviews which I considered to be too many and too time-consuming. I therefore decided to select the mother and father of the selected male and female student that had work both at home and outside home. Then I selected the mother alone of the

male and female student that had work at home and the father was selected of the ones who had work outside home. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

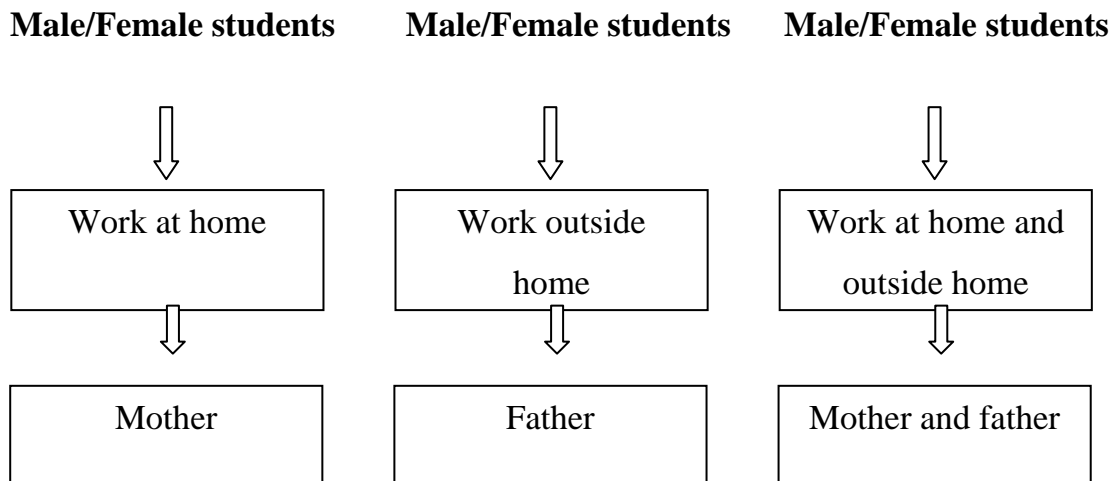


Figure 2: *Selection of Parent Interviewees*

The Teachers. What is the teachers' perception of the lives of working students related to school and work? What do they know about this group of working students at their school? What is the role of the teacher in their effort to create a good school life? To answer these questions I selected teachers in grade 8 as informants. The teaching in the second cycle, which is from grade 5 to 8, is subject oriented. The teachers have one subject that they teach in several classes. In addition every class has its home-room teacher. To get enough information I would therefore have to interview several teachers. Because of limited time the study does not allow me to have too many interviews so I decided to have a focus group discussion with teachers teaching in the two classes from which I selected the students. I purposefully selected 8 teachers, who all represented different subjects.

The Administration of the School. The school administration is an important data source on what the school offers their students. What can the school as institution do to contribute to a good school life for their working students? And what do they know about the working students attending their school? The present and the former principal of the school are selected as informants. The present principal has been employed at the school for one year. The previous principal is attending a graduate

programme in special needs education and I decided also to interview her as she knows the school from several years.

Access. Gaining access to the selected informants is an important step in the data collection process. I needed permission from the Capacity Building Office of the Subcity to conduct a research at the school which I forwarded to the administration of the school. The principal of the school introduced me to those teachers who were going to be my contact teachers throughout my research work. These teachers helped me to get access to those teachers whom I selected for the focus group discussion, to the two selected classes and to the selected student informants as well as their parents.

After having selected the informants I needed their acceptance to take part in the study. I gathered the students for a meeting where I described the central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in the data collection. I informed that I was going to use a tape recorder and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I made it clear that the information they would give would be treated confidentially. This same information was also given to all the other participants in the research. As I visited the school rather frequently it was easy to reach the students as well as the teachers and the principal. Access to the parents and acceptance from them to participate in the study was secured partly by visiting them before the interview took place, partly through communication with their son/daughter who was among the selected students. This was also how I made appointments with the parents as the school has no register with the names, addresses or phone numbers.

3.2.2. Methods

In the following an overview is given of the different methods used in order to collect the necessary data.

Questionnaire. A questionnaire was used to collect data from two classes in grade 8 (Appendix No 5). One of the objectives of the study is to get an overview of the number of students in 8th grade that work and what kind of work they do. Altogether

there were 119 students in the two classes so with this high number of students a questionnaire would suit this purpose. In addition to this the information from the answers of the questionnaire was used as bases when selecting the students for the in-depth interviews. As the students do not know English the questionnaire needed to be translated into Amharic, which is the mother tongue of the students. The questionnaire has a mixture of close-ended and open-ended questions within six different areas, which are already mentioned.

A pilot study was conducted to try out the questionnaire. The main purpose was to test the understanding of the questions and hence give the opportunity to revise the questionnaire before the main study. In this study it would not be necessary with too many respondents. What I considered as important was that the pilot study should be conducted in a similar environment as the main study. Hence a primary school was selected which is situated in the neighbour area and has a similar socio-economic background. I had a meeting with the principal in order to get access, to give information about the study and to make necessary appointments. One eight grade class was selected randomly among all the classes at this level. The principal of the school gave me access to the class for one period, which is forty minutes, for the students to answer the questions. The translator and I were present in the class. It was particularly necessary for the translator to be present as I considered it important to give the students the opportunity to ask questions about things being ambiguous. This we experienced as very useful and resulted in some of the questions being modified or changed.

Interview. Interview is the main method of data collection in this study. A consequence of the chosen perspective is that the informants are asked to describe their experiences and express their perceptions and therefore interview became the method. Tangen (1998) refers to this as an interview where the interviewee gives a report of its own experiences (*Selvrapportering gjennom intervju*). This is commonly used within phenomenological research and is assumed to give the most useful information to answer the research questions/objectives. For this purpose interview

guides were designed (Appendix No 6, 7 and 8) for the students, the parents and the principals. The type of guides suiting this purpose is a standardized open-ended interview (Gall et al., 2003). This involves a predetermined sequence and wording of the same set of questions for the informants representing the same group, in this study being the students, the parents, and the principals. This will minimize the possibility of bias. However, when in the interview situation the open-form questions give the opportunity also to get additional information if necessary by probing more deeply. I have chosen to have six interviews with students and six with parents and consider that to be a reasonable size. All these interviews were one-to-one in-depth interviews.

As experience and perception are main areas of focus in this research this is reflected in the interview guide. I have asked my interviewees to describe their experiences and then express their perception related to the different topics. I wanted them to express this through what they liked/disliked or was satisfied or not satisfied with which are the criteria I have chosen for developing the concept school life quality. The interview guide for the students has three main aspects: school, work and parents. The questions concentrate on life at work and life at school. The interview guide for the parents also focuses on school and work. I wanted to get information on the parents' perception of the school life and the working life of their sons/daughters as well as their perception of how work influence on the school life of their daughter or son. The interview guide for the principals was structured in the same way with the main topics being work and school.

For the teachers I chose to have a focus group discussion. This was chosen for several reasons. To get good information from the teachers it would be necessary to interview more than one. The interviewees are similar and the interaction among them would likely yield better information than individual interviews. The focus group technique is supposed to work well when the members of the group are on equal bases. I consider the teachers to be such a group. Lastly, the time available to collect the information was also limited so therefore this would save a lot of time. An interview guide was developed for this purpose (Appendix No 9). This interview

guide also focused on description and perception within the aspects of work, school and parents, but presenting a set of topics to be explored and where the wording of the questions are not predetermined. They can be decided by the interviewer as the situation evolves.

All the interviews, except those with the parents, were conducted at the school. I tried to find a place that was quiet and free from distractions. That was not easy as there is rather much noise, especially in the breaks and the rooms are not well isolated. The one-to-one interviews became good and the recording was of acceptable quality. It was, however, more difficult with the focus group discussion as the acoustic in the room was not satisfying. Therefore I decided to do two follow up interviews.

The interviews with the students and the parents were conducted in the native language of the informants, which is Amharic so it was necessary to have a translator. He read through the interviews in advance which I had written in English. He joined me during the interviews and translated on the spot. The teachers and the principals know English so I was able to conduct the interviews without the translator.

I planned to conduct the focus group discussion in English as the teachers all said they mastered English. I was, however, given false expectations as I experienced that some did not understand English so well and this I assume prevented some from giving good information. I also experienced that it was difficult to get everyone involved in the discussion. The males were more active than the females. I am aware that this is related to culture, so I mentioned this in my introduction of the interview in order to encourage the females to participate. Due to these reasons as well as to the bad acoustic conditions previous mentioned I was not satisfied with this discussion so I decided to have follow-up interviews with the males and females separately.

I used a tape recorder when conducting the interviews and later I transcribed them. I had planned to do so immediately after every interview. This was not possible due to lack of time. The turbulent political situation mentioned in chapter 1 led to a delay in

my planned schedule. Therefore I have transcribed almost all of the interviews after my return to Norway. That means I was not able to do any follow-up interviews.

3.3. Analysing of Data

The methods used for collecting data are as already mentioned a questionnaire and interviews. The information from the questionnaire gives answer to questions related to work the students in grade 8 have in this part of Addis Ababa. The findings are presented in tables and will be discussed related to previous research on child labour as well as to policies about child labour stated in national and international legislation.

The interviews with the students are the main source of data. The information gained from these interviews is transcribed for each of the students. These transcriptions are subjected to phenomenological-thematic analysis using a methodology mainly developed by Giorgi (1985). This consists of five steps and the aim is to develop themes that grasp what is essential in the students' experiences about their school life. This is illustrated in the model below (figure 3).

Before going into each of the steps in more detail I will discuss the concept *theme* which is important to understand when analysing the material. In our everyday language theme often means topic or content. Here it is used in a phenomenological context which means that *themes* may be understood as structures of experience. It is

“the experience of focus, of meaning, of point” (Van Manen, 1990)

When I read a text I ask the question, what is the meaning or its point? The formulation of a theme can at best only be a simplification or an inadequate summary of the notion. Themes are not objects or statements one encounters in the interview text. However, a word, a sentence or a statement may express the key of a theme. In the following analysis I have used what I call “core statements” which express the essence of the meaning and constitute a theme.

We may wonder how a theme relates to the phenomenon that is being studied. First of all the theme is a tool in order to grasp at the meaning of what is experienced. It is a way of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand. Secondly, theme describes the content of the phenomenon. A good theme formulation somehow seems to touch the core. Then theme is always a reduction of the phenomenon so there is no thematic formulation that can completely capture the full and deep mystery of the experienced meaning of the phenomenon. The task to develop themes that can capture something essential from the experiences of the students follows the steps as described in the following.

The first step is to create what Giorgi (1985) mentions as “**A Sense of the Whole**”. In my analysis this consists of an initial general description of experiences expressed by each of the six students after reading through the transcribed interviews (Appendix 10). I have sought to capture the most essential experiences from each of the interviews. This I consider as necessary background for the more detailed analyses of the material to come later.

The second step is to find **significant statements**. These are extracted from each of the descriptions, phrases and sentences that directly pertain to the investigated phenomenon. I listed out statements expressed by each of the students about what they liked and what they disliked. These statements are grouped according to the categories in the interview guide.

The third step is to group all the statements of all the six students into **meaning units**. Giorgi refers to this step as “Transformation of Subject’s Everyday Expressions”. I examined the content within each of the categories from the previous step. The statements given by the students are in this process “translated” or interpreted by the researcher into meaning units that presumably grasp what is essential. This is a difficult step as it is important that the meanings arrived at must not sever the connection with the original descriptions (Appendix 11)..

In the *fourth step* **themes** are developed from the meaning units. Giorgi (1985) calls this “Synthesis of Transformed Meaning Units into a Consistent Statement”. This allows for the emergence of themes common to all of the students’ descriptions. I have tried to see the perceptions of their experiences of the different aspects and transfer these into an overall understanding of what the students perceive as positive and negative about their school life. What constitutes the themes is “core statements” made by the students that I have considered to express the key of the theme (Appendix 12).

In the last and *fifth step* **an exhaustive description** is made which is the result of the integration of the findings from the analysis. The description of school life quality is as unequivocal a statement of the essential structure of the phenomenon as possible. I have chosen to refer to the themes when formulating the description. Usually the themes are formulated in a way which is not found in the interviews as this express a general description. I have, however, found individual statements in the interviews that have a significant validity. An example of such a “core statement” is “I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge”. I found this statement to cover a general description of an essential perception expressed by the students. This model of analysis is illustrated in Figure 3 below. (The model illustrates the five steps of the analysis. It is simplified related to the explanation above. There are six boxes on step 1 and 2 representing the six different students. The lines drawn from the left box of significant statements and from the meaning units apply to all the other boxes of the same step).

This model of the phenomenological-thematic analyses applies to the interviews with the students about their school life. As mentioned earlier further objectives of the study are, through information given by the students themselves, the parents, the teachers and the principals, to give an understanding of how work, parents and school influence on their school life. When analyzing these interviews the above model is modified. Narrative descriptions have been made which are based on significant statements emerged from the transcriptions. These descriptions are categorized partly

according to topics in the interview guides and partly according to themes emerged after the significant statements were made.

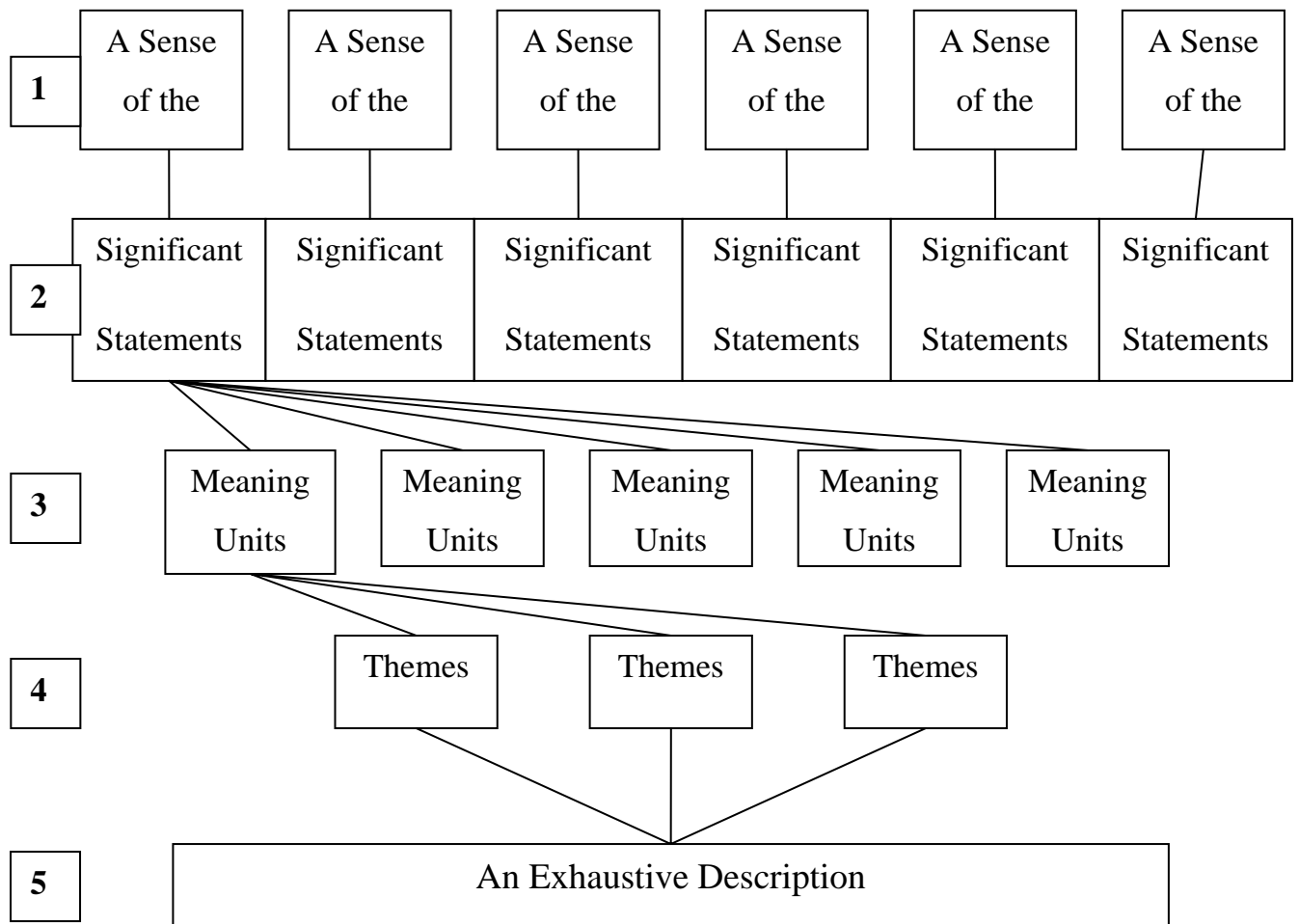


Figure 3: *Model of Analysis*

3.4. Validity / Reliability

3.4.1. Validity

The aim of this study has been to develop knowledge and understanding of the school life of working students. Considerations concerning validity must be related to this aim. Much is written in qualitative research about validity. Maxwell (1992) points at the importance of securing validity throughout the whole process from the planning

of the research till the report is published. Some researchers do not use the concept of validity. The main reason is that the concept first was used in the positivistic tradition and still some researchers relate the concept to this tradition. I use validity in my research as the concept is much discussed and established within qualitative research.

When considering the validity of this research I have looked upon this work as a process and therefore asked the question: What have I done to secure validity before, during and after the interviews?

Before the interview: Before starting the interviews I spent much time at the school and visited homes and the area where my informants live. As a person coming from outside it was important for me to try to get an understanding of this society. According to Monica Dalen (2004) intersubjectivity between researcher and interviewee is a precondition in the qualitative interview. I assume my effort in getting to know the area and getting close to the participants will contribute to the validity of the study.

I spent a lot of time in preparing the instruments in order to formulate questions that would give answers to my research objectives. I got approval from my local advisor and my translator. An important part of developing the questionnaire was the translation. It was checked and read through by several persons. A pilot study for the questionnaire was conducted at a similar school as the selected school for the study.

It has also been important to make clear my own role as researcher, especially as my role may influence on the interpretation of the material. My position as a foreigner coming from a totally different culture may influence on me and shape my interpretations and my approach to the study. My background as researcher is discussed in chapter 1(1.10.).

During the interview: When conducting the interview I as an interviewer had to consider if I influenced on the descriptions made by the interviewees. But it is difficult to know how honest they have been in their answers or if they have given answers they think would be expected. How the interviewees look upon the role of

the researcher is important so to create an atmosphere of confidence is vital. Based on these reflections I gave information to make clear my role, I tried to make a good, safe atmosphere, and during the interview be relaxed and focused, giving them enough time and clarify things that might be unclear. As most parents do not visit the school I chose to conduct the interviews with them in their homes as I assumed they would feel more comfortable with that. My impression is that the informants were all willing to contribute and to express their experiences and perceptions.

The students and the parents spoke their native language which is Amharic. I had made all the questions in English which were translated on the spot and the same was done by the answers. All the interviews were tape recorded. The translator listened to parts of the interviews to check his own translation. The translation process in itself is a threat to the validity of this research. In fact three languages are involved when taking into account my own mother tongue, Norwegian. The translator has an important role during the whole process. To me he became a person with whom I could discuss difficult issues, he could explain about things I could not understand and, when necessary, he patiently listened to my feelings or confusions.

After the interview: One of the advantages with qualitative approach is that it is possible to go back to the informants to verify information or to go back to get additional information. The time limit for my stay prevented me from doing that. I have already mentioned that the political situation delayed my data collection process. Unfortunately I was not able to start transcribing until getting back to Norway. So have I managed to transcribe accurately and convey the meaning? To get a valid understanding of the experiences of the informants it is very important that the statements are accurately transcribed. I have myself transcribed all the interviews and listened many times to the tapes in order to secure the statements being correctly written down.

To have informants that are rich on information was important in order to be able to interpret and analyse the material and get an understanding of the phenomenon. I assumed all the selected informants to be information rich. From the descriptions of

the experiences the aim is to get the meanings of the perceptions of the interviewees. Then it is a question of interpretation by the researcher and interpretive validity (Tangen, 1998) becomes important. One way of securing this is to check the interpretations against the collected data, but of course the interpretations can not be directly controlled. They just have to be considered related to the statements given. The researcher can never be sure if he/she has managed to capture the meanings and perspectives of another person.

Rich and thick descriptions are important as it is the writer's detailed descriptions of the participants or setting that enables the reader to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred. The dilemma for the researcher is to make the research both reflect the phenomena from a perspective that makes sense locally and go beyond the particularities to make a more general statement about the phenomena (Rogoff, 2003).

3.4.2. Reliability

When using the concept reliability I relate it to how exact I have been able to describe all the steps in my research so that other researchers can repeat and get similar and comparable results. Otherwise this concept is mostly related to quantitative research where the demand is that the research findings can be checked by other researchers. This is more difficult in qualitative research as the role of the researcher is more closely in interaction with the informants and part of a natural setting. The fact that the circumstances of the research may change makes it difficult to check the results of the research. To secure reliability I have tried to be as accurate as possible in the description of the research process. I have described my own background and position, the informants and the interview situation and finally I have stated the analytical methods used when adapting the collected information.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical decisions arise throughout the entire research process. Kvale (1996) refers to ethical issues on seven research stages from the very start of thematizing through to the final report.

Informed consent is one important issue, another is confidentiality and a third is consequences. I had to gain permission from responsible authorities and consent from all the informants. This entails also to explain what the research is about and for what purpose it is conducted. When using tape recorder the informants had to be explained why there was a need to use it. The participants were informed that they might withdraw from participating at any time during the research. The participants were informed that the information will be treated confidentially and that they will be informed about the findings from the research.

4. Data Analysis and Presentation

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the analysed empirical data collected during this study. It would be useful at this point to remind about the aim and objectives of the study before presenting the findings. The ultimate aim of this study is to shed light on the phenomenon of school life quality for working students. Since working students are in focus one objective has been to get data which constitutes background information related to work and working conditions of this particular group. Another objective has been to investigate how work, parents and school influence on the quality of the students' school life.

The findings presented have been obtained partly through information from a questionnaire, partly from information rich qualitative interviews using one-to-one approach for all the informants except for the teachers, where the focus group interview was used. The chapter is divided into two main parts according to the data collection methods used. The first one presents data from the questionnaire on work and working conditions of the students. The other one gives a presentation of the analysed data that have emerged out of qualitative interviewing of the different informants being the students, their parents, grade eight teachers and two school principals. In chapter 3, the data collection procedure and the model of analysis of the interviews are presented.

4.2. Presentation of Analysed Data from the Questionnaire

The findings presented in this section are from the data emerged from the questionnaires which were given to 119 students in two classes in 8th grade (Appendix No. 5). There were 112 students that answered that they had some kind of work outside school which is 94% of the total number of students asked. From this

total of 112 there are 66 girls and 46 boys. In the following I will present the findings of the kind of work the students do, why they work, how many hours they work and whether they like or dislike it.

4.2.1. Kind of Work done by Students in 8th Grade

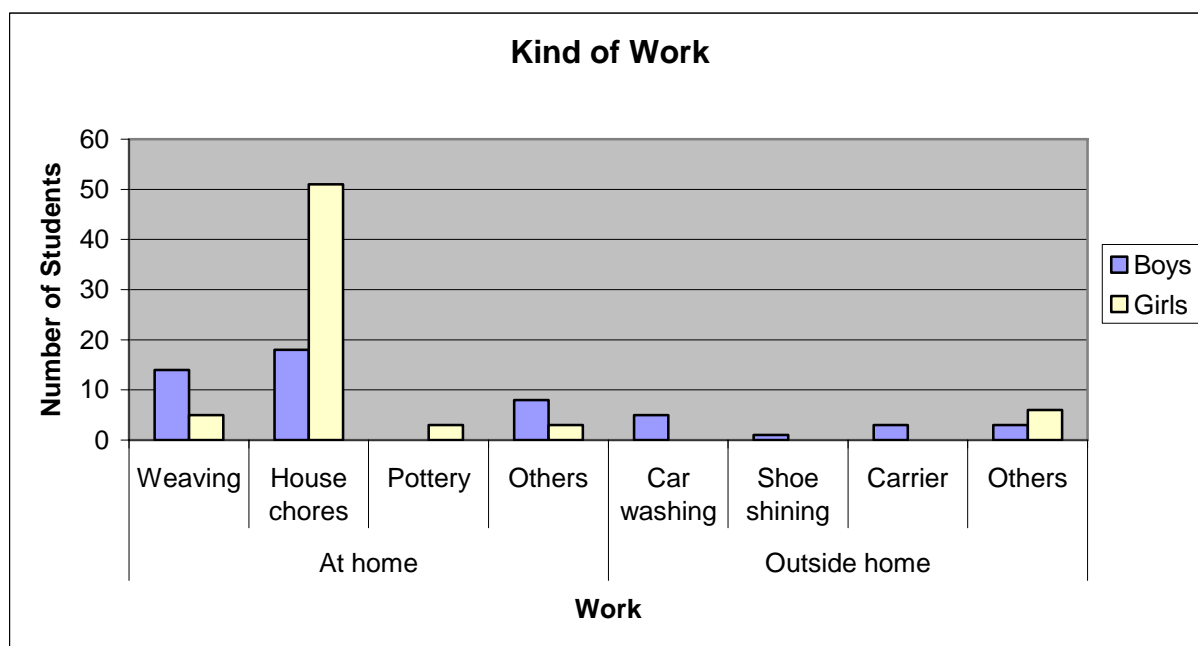


Table 1: *Kind of Work*

The table shows that most of the students are engaged in work taking place at home. That is the case for both girls and boys. Some of the students mention several activities. The most common activity is house chores. From the 112 students there were 69 who answered they were involved in household activities (61,6%). Both boys and girls take part, but far more girls than boys. Altogether 51 girls mentioned some kind of household activity as their work whereas 18 boys say they are involved in that kind of work. The boys mention activities such as cleaning the house, bringing water, helping parents, going shopping and washing clothes. The girls mention cleaning the home and different utensils, washing clothes, cooking and baking injera.

There were 19 students who answered that they were involved in weaving. As this business is considered as one of the most common in this area it was surprising that not more than 16,6% of 112 students say they work with weaving. That this is a

business for the males is also shown by the fact that 14 boys are involved compared to only 5 girls. In pottery only girls are involved. Information given in the interviews say that in families occupied with weaving and pottery all the members of the family are involved. Further it is said that these activities are the most common in this area. That is also my impression from my informal observation when walking in the area. It is therefore a surprise that so few of the students say they are involved in these activities. Is it so, as some of the teachers mentioned, that they are too ashamed of telling that they are involved in this kind of work.

Other kinds of working activities they do at home are metal- and wood work, assisting parents with various jobs, serve as waitress or shopkeeper, and go to the flour mill or “whatever jobs assigned for me”. There are more boys who say they have work outside home than the girls. The kind of work they mention are washing cars, shoe polishing, transporting goods and working in a tea room, a shop and a garage. The girls mention taking a child to school, selling injera or vegetables and working in a barber shop.

4.2.2. Why do Students Work?

In the questionnaire the alternatives showed in Table 2 were given to answer the question why the students work. The answers given are shown in the table. Some students chose several alternatives. The figures show very clearly that it is the need to assist their families that make the students work. There are not many who say they work in order to earn money. Neither are there many who actually get paid for the work they do. One question in the questionnaire asked about that. From 110 students answering 24 said they were paid.

	Girls	Boys	Total
1. I like working	11	8	19
2. I want to earn money myself	1	5	6
3. My parents want me to work	12	4	16
4. I have to earn money for my family	4	8	12
5. I have to assist my family	54	27	81
6. I want to learn a skill	6	7	13

Table 2:
*Why
Students
Work*

4.2.3. How much do Students Work?

One question asked about the number of hours the students work every week. It seemed this was a difficult question to answer as only 37 of the 46 boys and 45 of the 66 girls answered the question. Some wrote “always” or “every day”. The answers given are shown in the following table.

	Girls	Boys	Total
1 – 10 hours	22	19	41
11 – 20 hours	13	6	19
21 – 30 hours	3	6	9
31 – 40 hours	4	3	7
41 – 50 hours	2	1	3
51 - hours	1	2	3

Table 3: *Number of Hours Students Work*

4.2.4. Why do Students like/dislike Work?

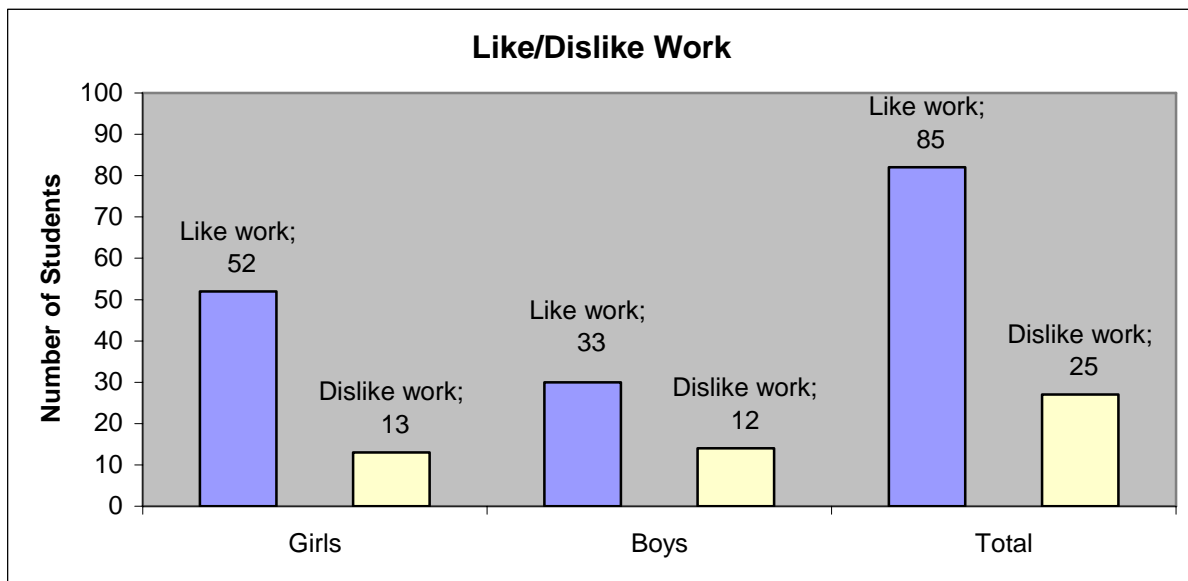


Table 4: *Number of Students who like/dislike Work*

From the 112 students working there were 110 answering the question whether they like or dislike the work they are doing and why they do so. Altogether 85 of the 110 students say they like the work – a percentage of 77,2%.

The different answers given about why they like work I have grouped into categories which I have called: *help*; *skills*; *like*, *paid* and *obligation*. Most of the answers mention “learn new *skills*” as the reason. Some say they simply “*like*” the work or use the words enjoy, proud, pleasure or good. Further many say they want to or have to *help* their parents. It seems as if the concept help has different implications. A few (only 5) say *payment* is the reason. Some say they like work because they have to work or say there is no school without working. I call it *obligation*. This last mentioned category I have also used when classifying the answers about dislike of work. Others are *education* and *harmful*. Some say they dislike work because it takes from the time they should rather have spent on studying. Others say the work is exhausting, it spoils the eyes and is not clean; those are answers I have categorized as *harmful*.

4.2.5. Summary

The answers from the questionnaire show that most of the students who do some work outside school work at home and mostly are involved in household chores. Since this is an area where a lot of the families run weaving and pottery businesses it would be expected that more of the students were involved in those activities. Most of the students say they work in order to assist their families and relatively few get paid. It is interesting to register that so many say they like work. Those who dislike work have mentioned as main reasons the obligation to work and that education will suffer.

4.3. Presentation of Analysed Data from the Interviews

The findings presented in this section are from the data emerged from the interviews with the six working students, their parents, teachers in 8th grade and the present and former principal of the school. As the interview data from the students are in the foreground of this study I have chosen to present them as they are analysed through each of the five steps described in chapter 3 (phenomenological-thematic analysis). Step 5 is presented in this chapter while steps 1, 3 and 4 are attached as appendices (Appendices 10, 11 and 12).

The information given by the students about work and parents is presented later in the chapter and related to the influence work and parents may have on the school life of the students. The findings of the data from the interviews with the parents, the teachers and the principals are presented as narrative descriptions based on the significant statements extracted from their transcriptions. The phenomenological-thematic model is for this purpose modified.

4.3.1. Students' Perception of their School Life

In the following the steps of the analysis model are presented.

Step 1: “A Sense of the Whole” – general descriptions (Appendix 10)

From the transcriptions short general descriptions(in chapter 3 referred to as “Sense of the Whole”) has been made as the first step of the analysis giving a general impression of the situation of each of the students including their description about school and the work they are doing outside school.

Step 2: Significant Statements

The second step consists of extracting significant statements that are categorized into school, teachers and work. The significant statements for all the students are divided into statements that express what they like or are satisfied with and what they dislike or are not satisfied with.

Step 3: Meaning Units (Appendix 11)

The meaning units have been formulated from the significant statements. I have grouped them in four categories: Knowledge, Class, Physical Environment and Teachers. From the statements these groups emerged and are those common to all the students' descriptions. They are limited to what is related to the school life of the students as this is the basic data needed to develop the concept of school life quality. The meanings have been arrived at by reading and rereading and reflecting upon the significant statements in the original transcriptions.

Step 4: Clusters of Themes (Appendix 12)

I have already discussed *theme* as a concept in chapter 3. The clusters of themes are a kind of synthesis of the meaning units already presented. It has been important to grasp the meanings of the individual students and transform them into themes. I have been concerned about the perceptions of the students' experiences within the different topics from the interviews with the intention to get an understanding of what the students perceive as positive or negative in their lives at school. This is a more

holistic understanding of the experiences of the individual students. Hence four clusters of themes have emerged and are common to all the students' descriptions. I have used "core statements" expressed by the students that I found grasped the essence of the meaning and constitute a theme.

Step 5: An Exhaustive Description of Perceived School Life Quality

At this step the different themes are integrated into one general description. In order to describe quality of school life for working students including the various perspectives presented in the previous steps of the analyses I found it suitable to keep the themes from step 4 and used the same "core statements".

1. "The good teachers devote themselves". The devoted teacher and the caring interaction between the teacher and the student are perceived by the students to be essential. The caring interaction reveals itself through the teachers praising the students, appreciating them for their attempts, encouraging them to participate, helping them, laughing with them, listening to them in order to understand them and treating everybody with respect. This attachment provides a good climate and a safe environment for the students to feel free, safe and relaxed to participate and be active in the class. This builds up their self confidence. In this caring interaction the existential presence is perceived by the students to be more than physical presence. There is the aspect of the teachers devoting themselves to the students to make them learn and develop. The willingness of the teachers to give of themselves is also perceived by the students as an attitude of really listening to understand their reality. The relaxation, the feeling of being respected, the comfort and the security is a direct result of the way they are met, being heard and responded to by the teachers.

2. "Some do not understand our conditions". The teachers who don't take time to listen to the students and do not understand their situation contribute to reduce the quality of their school life. They are perceived as teachers only being physically present. They are there only because of their job and their effort is limited to what is absolutely necessary. They are not there to create a safe and good teaching learning environment and to meet the needs the students might have. The students are met by

a minimal amount of interest and with lack of respect. They often sit in the staffroom after class has begun and they do not follow up or correct their exercise books. They are by the students perceived as non-caring. The teachers who don't give the necessary time and interest to the students leads to a situation whereby the students feel they are not being listened to and understood. It will make the students afraid and shy and when not being given the possibility to ask necessary questions. With this lack of respect towards the students they may be treated in a harsh manner and sometimes being harassed. It occurs that the teachers use corporal punishment by using a stick or some may kick when they get really angry. Because they know they may be kicked they keep disciplined. By some it is not totally rejected. The penalty depends on the severity. By others, however, it is perceived as harmful to their education. The unprofessional teachers don't do what they are expected to do and that makes the students sad. It creates negative feelings and they will start to hate the subject and it will influence on their academic performance. In the end it spoils their education.

3. "I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge". The caring personality and the attitude of the devoted teacher are reflected in the way they teach and impart knowledge and in the way they follow up the students. Getting knowledge in itself gives quality to the school life of the students as that is considered to give them the opportunity to improve their lives. They are encouraged to do their best and praised for that, which will keep them up and make them work hard to get better results. Good results bring about self esteem, positive personality and it makes them proud and happy and respected by their teachers, their classmates and their parents. The caring interaction is revealed in the culture of helping each other in the class. Being the outstanding student you have to help those who need peer-support.

The main source of knowledge is given through the textbooks with which they are satisfied. What is written in them is science and has to be accepted. The access to additional books at the library is useful for their opportunity to get additional knowledge, but there should have been more books.

4. “It is known that we Ethiopians are very poor, so compared to that the school is very good”. Having a nice compound with trees, flowers and a garden gives the students the opportunity to relax or to do different activities in their break time. The compound is there for them to use. They like it to be clean. So is also the case with the classrooms and the library. In the dry season the dust becomes a problem. Even if the classrooms are cleaned they are still dusty and the books and the clothes get dirty. For those who suffer from allergy it is very bad. The students clearly express their dissatisfaction with the toilets that are not clean and with an unpleasant smell and they say they suffer because of that. The physical environment affects the well being of the students.

The compound is now disturbed by gravelling for the new buildings which has reduced the opportunities for out door activities. But it is temporary. The new buildings give classrooms which means opportunities for more students to get the necessary knowledge and education that is perceived to be important by the students as getting educated gives satisfaction.

4.3.2. Students’ Perception of their Work and how it Influences on their School Life

The data presented in the following is a description of the kind of work the students do out of school and why they work and how they perceive it. Lastly will be presented the influence they say work have on their school life. The analysis of this part of the data does not follow the five steps. This model is modified and the following narrative descriptions are based on significant statements extracted from the transcriptions.

Students’ Perception of their Work. The students in my research have different kinds of work. Two of them are involved in weaving which is a family business. All the family members are involved. Both of them work with spinning. That means they make the roles used when weaving. One of them is learning weaving. He is a boy. Only the boys do the weaving. The other student who is a girl participates in the

boiling and washing of the hanks of yarn as well. They both work long hours and they work hard to assist their families, one of them even harder now as his father is ill. He does some work before coming to school if he has not managed to finish in the evening. He goes to bed at 11pm at the earliest. The other student works every Monday to Friday after school. She usually makes ten bunches of thread and one bunch takes half an hour. So it means up to five hours every day. If she is speedy she can finish early. It is a work that both dislike. It is only the poverty that pushes them. One of them says that it consumes a lot of energy without getting anything out of it as there is nothing to learn from this work. It is their survival. The other says that unless she works she cannot learn or eat. It is her obligation to work. *“We live in a vicious circle – eat and work”*. It is harmful as one may get kidney problems from weaving. The female student says the thread spoils her hands when she is spinning and the hanks of yarn are boiled with soda and afterwards she squeezes them; that is tiresome work. The work has no attention from other social groups and they sell it for cheap. It is, however, important to make these traditional, cultural clothes and they make the persons who wear them happy.

One of the other students works as a shoe shiner in the afternoons. He also says the work is harmful to him. That is because he has got no fixed place and has no shelter which means that he is exposed to the sun and to the coldness. He also dislikes the work. He gains no knowledge and it is not important work. He just has to do it to earn money. It is his obligation to support himself with all school equipment. His parents are so poor so they support only with food. During one week he earns up to 15 birr.

The other three students do household work of different kinds, two of them mostly cleaning and cooking. One of them also assists her mother selling vegetables. Common for them all is that they all like the work they are doing. They do it because they have to assist their families, and they are happy to help. One mother needs help from her daughter because she is not healthy. One of them used to work in his brother's garage during summer time because he didn't want to sit home doing nothing. This work gave him some knowledge and experience, which he finds

important. He obtained some skills and got some benefits. All of the three don't find anything harmful about the work they are doing. On the contrary they say it is useful for the future, they learn from the work and they learn how to manage a home.

Works' Influence on their School Life. The two students who are involved in weaving say that their work influences on their school life. They have not enough time to study and to do their homework. One of them says he sometimes goes to bed without having done his homework. The other student says it is difficult to manage both work and school even if they try in the family to organize work and homework so that some work while others study. But she is not able to devote herself to education as priority is given to her job. Unless she has done her job she will not feel at ease doing her homework. At school neither of the two is satisfied with their results. One of them says he could be best in class but due to lack of time for his education he is only ranked nine in his class. They are both sometimes late or absent and being late means that they miss first class.

The other four students manage both school and work so work does not influence on their school life.

Summary. Those of the students who do weaving and shoe shining do it because they have to contribute to the economy of the family. They are pushed by the poverty and work is an obligation. They all dislike the work and look upon it as harmful. They also say there is nothing to learn from it. It seems clear that the two students involved in weaving can not manage school in a way with which they are satisfied.

Those who work at home assist their family with different household activities. They do it because they like to help and they like the work. They also say they learn from it – it is something useful for the future. The other students say work does not influence on their school life.

4.3.3. Parents' Perception of their Children's Life related to Work and School

The findings presented give a description of how the parents perceive the lives of their children related to school and to the work they do. I describe if the parents think their children like/dislike work and school, why they work, the importance of education and work, about their cooperation with the school and about their wishes for the future. In addition they give information about the work as being harmful or positive. Finally I present the findings on how they think work influence on school life of their children.

Parents' Perception of their Children's Life related to Work. One of the fathers says he does not like the shoe polish work of his son and don't want him to work with that. One mother says work is not a matter of liking; it is a matter of helping. Some of these students don't have any other choice but to help their parents. One mother says she needs her daughter to help her because she is not healthy. Another mother says her daughter likes to work, but doesn't like the work she is doing:

"She likes to assist and to help the family and thinks that is important. But she is not interested in the work, because she gives priority to her education".

One of the mothers says she does not like the education of her son to suffer so she does not force him to work too much. One mother says her son wants to give more attention to his education and that work is something that he has to do, especially now because his father has become ill. One father says the work is:

"...nothing to love – nothing to hate, work is a matter of survival, a way of life and she has to make it."

One father says it is the norm of the society that the children support their family and take part in the work. The work his daughter is doing is important because she works for the family and brings about some income.

One of the mothers says about the weaving work her son is doing that it is harmful:

“The dusty particles destroy the eyes and enter into the nose and create asthmatic or allergy problems. It may cause intestine- and kidney problems and the hands may be infected. The work is tiresome. He works in the morning and in the evening, sometimes up to 1 in the night”.

One father also says about the weaving that it has some harmful parts such as sitting long hours. He can't say it has a lot of benefit except that it gives the family its daily bread. And the work in itself is not sophisticated weaving. In this area it is more plain work. Another father, however, considers weaving as important work. He would have taught his son like he himself was taught by his own father. One of the students helps her mother to sell vegetables and her mother finds that harmful because one cannot resist the sun burning or the dust and sometimes people nag with you. The work is also tiresome and there is no benefit from it. One of the mothers says about harmful work that it is the children's interest that matters. The children must be given the choice to decide whether the work is good or not. Another mother says about her daughter who helps her with house hold activities that if she is skilled in doing her work it is useful for the future and not harmful.

Parents' Perception of their Children's Life related to School. All the parents except for one say their children like school. One father say he does not know because his daughter does not tell, but he hopes she likes school. One of the mothers tells that her son dislike to be nagged by the vice-principal or the unit-leader for coming late.

All the parents say they find education to be important. But it is not always possible to give it priority such as one mother says:

“She would rather give attention to his education, but we need bread.”

According to what the parents say school is the only choice if they want to bring about some change in their lives and become independent of their poor families. One mother says:

“If she attends school she will be successful; better than her because she is uneducated and that is the reason that she is living in this rift.”

Therefore the parents want to give priority to education and to their homework. One father says that if he was able to support his son he would prefer him not to work while some of the other parents manage to prioritize education by not letting it be interrupted by work.

When the parents are called to the school by the teachers or the principal it is because of some problem. “It is Ethiopian culture to be called to school only when there is a problem”, one father says. One mother tells about her son often coming late these days and she is called there by the teachers who tell her that she must not make him come late and not force him to work. She explains about the problems and that she is the responsible one. Her son is not late because of unwillingness or reluctance. As they live in this area everybody knows that children of a weaver work with their family. The teachers often tell that they have to assist their family. That is one of the principles of the school to teach them to help their family. But as one parent says:

“The teachers don’t know about our son working out of school.”

There is also an opportunity to take contact. One of the mothers told, however, that she never does. She gets all necessary information from her daughter. But one mother told, however, her eldest daughter once went to the school to talk to the vice principal about the problems in the home. She is not sure whether they have understood the problem because her daughter tells that she is still asked to bring her parents because she is late. One father tells that he sometimes goes to meetings at the school. There are two meetings for all the parents during the year.

“That is not for disciplinary matters, but the school calls us to attend a general meeting about contributing with money and other things such as we are told to control our kids, to advice them and to follow them up.”

One of the mothers tells she has been called for ceremonies when her daughter has been given a prize for being an outstanding student. Some of the parents say they are satisfied with the school as long as their children do not complain. One mother says her daughter is happy and then she is happy. Another mother says the teachers are good in following up and they always tell her that her son is a bright student. One

mother says she does not know the teachers. They have never been called which means that there are no problems.

Parents' Perception on how Work influence on School Life. One of the parents of the students involved in weaving say that her son has not enough time and energy for his homework and often coming too late influence on his academic performance. One father says they want to minimize the effect of work on the education of the daughter. They always support her not to be absent and want her to go to school in the morning and not be late. The other parents say that the work their children are doing does not influence on their academic achievement.

Summary. The two following statements may illustrate two different attitudes among the parents: *“work is not a matter of liking; it is a matter of helping”* and *“nothing to love – nothing to hate; work is a matter of survival, a way of life and she has to make it”*. One aspect is about the importance of helping whether you like the work or not. The other aspect is work as an obligation. The parents admit that some of the work their children have to do is harmful and express that education suffers because of their children's obligation to work. All say they find education important, particularly as a means to get out of poverty. But they seem not to have the choice.

It seems not to be any real communication with the school. So many parents never visit school and do not know the teachers. They say, however, they are satisfied with the school as long as their children are satisfied.

4.3.4. Teachers' Perception of Working Students and their Life related to Work and School

In the following the findings from the focus group discussions will be presented. Related to work it is focused on what the teachers know about the working students they have in their classes. More specifically that means identifying those who work, what kind of work they do, about harmful or positive aspects of the work and teachers' and students' attitudes to work. Finally the findings about how work influence on their school life will be presented.

The other aspect focused on is school and the main topic discussed in the focus group was the role of the teacher. However, other topics also came up during the discussions and all are presented in the following sections.

Teachers' Perception of Working Students. The teachers say that most of the students work, at least 2/3, but they cannot say the exact figure. They don't know of anyone who doesn't work out of school. This is something the teachers know because they know the area. There is no formal way of getting this information. Neither are there any formal teacher meetings about working students. They say the kind of work the students have is weaving, pottery, household work, shoe shining, working in shops, in taxis, in hotels or as mechanic assistants and that usually the students dislike work. They don't want to be called a weaver or a pottery maker as they are considered as low status people and an isolated group of people with no respect from others. They are ashamed of the work and usually the students don't want to tell.

The teachers say that it is not easy to tell the difference between working and non-working students. It is the degree of work that differs. From the way students act or behave one may assume that they are workers, but many factors influence on their performance. From their academic achievement one can not automatically conclude that they work or not work. The teachers say it would be important to know about the students who work. They mention different reasons: they can help and advice them, it may give them a clue about their academic achievement and it can explain why students are late or absent. Latecomers are sometimes considered as lazy by teachers and friends. They can talk to the parents and cooperate and discuss with them to find solutions and they will know the status of the family.

The teachers' perception is that the students are satisfied with school because that means free time from the hard work of the family. They enjoy being at school, they meet friends and get knowledge. Only coming to school one is considered as educated by the family and that means one gets recognition from the family.

Teachers' Perception of Harmful/Positive Work. The teachers consider work as harmful when the students work long time, work in the night, participate in labour based work, work beyond their ability or above their capacity, have no time to relax, no time for homework or are forced to work.

They considered work as positive when the work give practice in a profession or the work can make them independent and build up their capacity to run a business.

Teachers' Attitudes to Work. The teachers tell the students to be proud of the work they do. By working they do their duty to get food and other material and don't wait for help from others. So the teachers don't condemn the work itself, but the time spent on it when it takes time from the studying and from their classes. The school will teach the students in weaving and pottery to show it is acceptable work. Weaving traditional clothes contribute to developing the Ethiopian culture.

Work's Influence on the Students' School Life. According to the perception of the teachers their environment is not appropriate for learning. The work creates stress which is not good for the teaching-learning process. The students are thinking about their work and in class they are just present physically and absent mentally. They invest more on working activities and cannot think about their exercise books. Work is reason for students coming late and in the afternoon about 1/3 are absent. They come to class without having done their homework. On tests they are most often below average.

Teachers' Perception of their Role.

"The role of the teacher is to help, give assistance, advice, to be a promoter of their interest and to dig out their natural potential. The teachers should show direction, shape them, be builders of their personal morality and help them be competent in life."

This is what one of the teachers says about the role of the teacher. Further they say that the good teachers should be good models and guide the way. They always prepare, are punctual, trustful and honest, they keep the professionalism on ethics. They know the subjects well and have deep knowledge in transmitting knowledge.

They initiate the students to learn more and they must be interested and teach by their feeling and so make the students interested by the way they are teaching. They should know the local conditions and culture of the environment. They have to contact and learn from the experienced teachers. To get more knowledge they have to ask teachers and read more. Everybody is responsible for having deep knowledge not only about subjects, but about all educational issues.

It is the teachers' task to create a good school life for the students. They inform them about the importance of school to improve all aspects of life. Then they will get a better perception of school which will increase their interest to come to school. Another thing is to make the lessons as enjoyable as possible. As the students are forced to work many hours a day in their homes they don't have much time to enjoy at home. The more the students love their teacher the more they love their subject and they will come to class. So it is important that the teachers encourage their students and praise them. They say that the teacher is the most important factor in creating a good school life for the students.

The teacher is a counsellor and a person who guides the students. The teachers have to understand the problems of the students and help to solve them. One of the teachers told about a counselling programme at the school offered by 2 – 3 teachers. Any student could come and talk with them about social, family or economic problems. Sometimes they support the students financially. They say they talk only informally about students in their class. One says:

" We help them as human beings, but we have no idea about the consequences of what we are doing. We think we are helping them, but they are not helped with their disabilities".

One of the teachers said about showing care:

"I will not show care, but I care. I understand them, listen to them, accept their reason, talk to them, and am friendly, make jokes, smile to them, call them by their names and touch them when they come individually – but not in class."

The teachers praise when the students do their work well, when they are active. As teachers they are aware of the importance of praise. Culturally there is a tradition to punish when some does wrong things. Punishment is performed either physically or orally. But no praise is given when something good is done. Children are usually not praised. The teachers say today there is a change. When teaching about democracy, about solving problems, about negotiations, using punishment is very contradictory. But still it is practised. One teacher said that he/she had used corporal punishment. But the best is to speak to them.

But not all teachers are committed. Some just do it for their daily bread, just go into class, teach them and that's it. And why take extension courses as they don't give much increase in salary. Being a teacher means low income and low status.

Teachers' Planning of Educational Activities. The teachers make annual and weekly lesson plans. In the annual plans the general objectives are stated and in weekly plan the specific objectives are given. The methods are not written into the plan while another one says that is done. When asked about giving a definition of curriculum they say it designs specified topics for each grade that the students have to grasp. Many things are included in the curriculum, but the teachers have no knowledge. The educational policy is copied from the western world, so the curriculum is not based on their society; it is not regulated to their cultural aspect. The written is in conflict with the real society, they say. The textbooks are central. One of the teachers is satisfied with the textbooks. Another teacher says the old books are full of errors. Sometimes they are too theoretical and beyond the level of the students. Teachers find information in additional literature when necessary. The teachers' books give information about guidelines, objectives and teaching methods.

The teachers list a variety of methods that they use: lecture method often used because of number of students in the class, but is boring; the teacher asking questions; making the students participate by asking everyone; practical activities reflecting their own lives; making teaching materials; when introducing a new topic start by their own ideas; collect material or information from their own environment.

The students like group work and drama activities. But group work is often difficult to organize because many have to work

They say it is important to change or vary methods to keep the students awake. The students sometimes hate the approach used by the teachers. The teaching process could have been more effective and attractive with more demonstrations. They tell e.g. the laboratory is empty as all technical equipment lack. Therefore the teaching becomes too theoretical. Writing the theory is not the solution. They learn too much by sitting. But they say they must not be tied up in the problems, but have to do their best and do things by themselves. They have to be creative and make their own materials as long as they are not available.

Teachers' Cooperation with the Parents. The parents are actually not involved. They are called when there are problems. They will not come by themselves. There are formal meetings with all the parents twice a year. The teachers say that useful information from the parents would be how much students attend school, how much they study at home, about the family status such as level of education, economic status, values and interests and attitudes to education. Important would also be to get feed-back on the work of the teachers. Useful information from the teachers to the parents would be about the students' participation in class, homework, if they work well and attend classes properly, absence and about work out of school and education. They say they think this would influence on the behaviour of the students and that it would be better for them.

Summary. The findings reveal that there is no formal way through which the teachers obtain information about their working students. It seems as if the teachers see the positive as well as the harmful aspects of work as they say they don't condemn work in itself but the time spent on it when taking the time from the students' education.

The teachers seem to be very much aware of their role as a teacher. Important factors are first of all being a good model and next they see it as the teachers' task to create a

good school life for the students. What they mention as important is to understand the students. This indicates the importance of listening to them in order to be able to assist them and guide them to solve their problems. It seems as if the teachers' understanding of a good school life for the students is closely related to the quality of interaction between the teacher and the student in addition to the importance of transferring knowledge and attitudes. Further they express the necessity of cooperating with the parents. As it is now parents are actually not involved in school.

4.3.5. The Principals' Perception of Working Students

The interviews with the principals focus on the lives of working students related to work and school and on work's influence on their school life.

The Principals' Perception of Working Students. The principals say that the real number of students who work is not registered. But they know that most of the students work. They know it from the students themselves, they know the area, and they know it from visits in the homes or by observing them in their different activities. They assume the students do different kinds of work, but that the majority is engaged in weaving. Other kinds of work are pottery, selling things, polishing shoes and household activities. They expect the parents need their children to help them so they work to assist their families. They have to work also in order to be able to pay for their uniforms and the necessary teaching materials.

The principals also say that the students come to school and have an interest to get education. Some students ask for tutorial programs and they come and bring positive ideas. They are challenging their parents sometimes because they want to come to school. One of the principals says:

"I am satisfied to see the students' interest to attend classes in spite of the problems they have."

The students appreciate the motivation given them by the teachers, and they appreciate when the teacher or principal listen to their problem. They also appreciate

when their parents discuss with the teachers or the principal. In that way their academic achievement may be discussed, not only the work they do at home, and problems may be solved. But, as the principals say, all these things are also difficult because of the number of students in the class.

The Principals' Perception of Harmful/Positive Work. They say they consider work is harmful when they work beyond their ability and do work that is not according to their age. The parents exploit their children, one of the principals says. Weaving, however, is not harmful in itself, but it becomes harmful because passing long nights. On the other hand it is positive because it shows their culture and tradition and as such is appreciated, and they learn a skill for the future life.

Work's Influence on the Students' School Life. The principals express that as the students are occupied with work they have too little time for homework, to read and to do their assignments. In the classes some students are only present with their body, and their thinking is outside. They are not attentively listening to the teachers and not actively participating. They are tired, and don't feel happy. So they become low achievers and some have to repeat the class.

“Some students come late to school in the morning, some are absent and some even drop out. The school tries to get them back. We go to their house and talk to them and we help them through our clubs,”

one of the principals say. It is a challenge for the school when families keep their children at home. They indicate that work affects them physically, academically and socially. It may be difficult for working students to attend the tutorial classes offered because the family is waiting for them to come home. Saturdays are market days so parents don't send their children to tutorial classes as they have to work.

Local Culture and Traditions. In the ETP it is stated about the curriculum that textbooks should give due attention to concrete local conditions. Hence the principals were asked if the school give attention to the specific conditions of the area. They say that the students need to know their area and to appreciate their culture and their traditions. With the weaving the school can teach about traditional Ethiopian clothes

and put in their mind “ethiopianism”. Weaving and pottery are great things for the Ethiopians. The weaving place at school also aims at developing the ability and creativity of the students. Their creativity is appreciated and respected by the school. The school advice the students to do both practical and academic and the academic should not be ignored. The principals say that the parents used to have a negative attitude to this kind of work and that it is not much respected, but now there is a change. People are now encouraged to produce these kinds of cloth and pottery and are also supported by the government. The school tries to create awareness and tell them this handicraft is good for their life.

Special Needs Education/ Teacher Education. When asking one of the principals about the working students having special needs the answer was:

“The working students just need to be in school. The problem with the parents is difficult. We can not help. But we are stating the fact that the only way out of the poverty is education.”

One principal says that most of the teachers have no knowledge about special needs, but continues to state that during the past four years courses in special needs have become part of the teacher training programme at the college. In order to create awareness about special needs among teachers, courses are offered by the sub city. Many teachers also take extension courses in different subjects to get a degree. There are summer courses, in-service programmes and refreshment courses. One of the principals points out that this is not enough, but it is a good start.

Cooperation with Parents. One of the principals says there is not much cooperation with the parents, but the school is making a strong effort to communicate with them. The other principal says the students wish the school to cooperate with the parents. They want the principal or the teachers to invite the parents to tell them to give their child time to do their assignments.

The school calls all the parents to a meeting twice a year. At this meeting the academic achievement of the students is discussed, and information is given about students’ problems and assignments etc. One of the principal says the parents are

called in order for the school to talk with them and tell them what their children should do in life and that the parents should not ignore their children. Further the homeroom teachers invite parents individually if there is a need; that is when there is a disciplinary or academic problem.

One of the principals describes the teacher-parent association which consists of seven members, three from the parents and three from the teachers in addition to the principal. Its responsibility is to implement the policy guidelines which consist of seventeen points of which one is to help and promote the quality of education in the school and to solve problems which could hinder the teaching learning process in the school. The implementation of these points is difficult due to different reasons. First, the school does not invite and involve parents in their planning or in their decision making. Second, the teachers do this as extra work without any payment. They are, however, prioritised in selection of teachers for different in-service- or extension courses. Third, it is difficult to make the parents attend the meetings because of their poor economic standard which means they are occupied with getting money. They prioritize their daily life. It is, however, tried to involve parents in the evaluation of the teachers once every semester. Lastly the principal emphasize that there should be awareness raising programmes for parents in the school and there should also be different strategies to involve parents.

Summary. The principals are aware of the fact that the majority of their students work and get the information from knowing the area and talking with the students. Further they are aware that some are engaged in activities that might be harmful to the students, but they also see the positive aspects of work. It is obvious that the school puts an effort into creating awareness of the local handicraft traditions of the area and both principals were proud of the initiative to build a house for practicing weaving.

They both agree that work has negative implications on the school life of the students. They both express, however, satisfaction about the students' interest to attend school. The number of students is one factor mentioned which makes it

difficult to care for each and everyone of the students. Within the field of special needs education it is clearly expressed that the level of knowledge is insufficient and the education offered is not yet satisfactory.

Finally both principals see the importance of cooperating with the parents. It is interesting to notice that one of them argues that the students themselves wish the school to cooperate with the parents. Particularly one of the principals states that there are several challenges related to school-parent cooperation, but in spite of these it should be possible to develop cooperation through the existing parent – teacher association.

4.3.7. Summary

In this subchapter I have presented the findings emerged from the interviews with my informants. Related to the phenomenon school life quality the main findings are referred to as “core statements” expressed by the students that I found grasped the essence of the meaning and constitute a theme. They were

1. “The good teachers devote themselves”
2. “Some do not understand our conditions”
3. “I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge”
4. “It is known that we Ethiopians are very poor, so compared to that the school is very good”.

As this study is a replica of Tangens research about the phenomena *school life quality* the findings reveal some similarities in spite of the fact that the two studies are conducted under very different circumstances, in environments of different socio economic conditions, different cultural traditions, values and norms. In both studies it seems that the students’ relation to their teachers is an important aspect contributing to good school life quality. Further both groups mention knowledge related to opportunities to a good life in the future.

My study has three perspectives where one is related to the students’ work described in the first part of this chapter, another one is the understanding of what contributes to

school life quality. Last there is what may influence on the students' school life in a positive or negative way. Here the findings show what the teachers indicate as important, namely being a good role model and a good mediator. The parents' influence is strongly related to their economic situation and hence their ability to support their children in getting education. Their view on the importance of education they all have in common.

The findings presented in this chapter are the informants' experiences and perceptions seen from an inside perspective (emic perspective). The next chapter will go beyond the informants' own perspectives to gain theoretical understanding through discussing the findings related to previous research and to theories (etic perspective).

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter deals with the discussion of central findings of the study related to previous research and theory presented in chapter 2. Finally the conclusion and recommendations are presented. The discussion will have two perspectives. First, focus will be on the phenomenon *quality of school life*, which will be discussed relating the themes from my research to the dimensions in the research conducted by Tangen (1998). Next the discussion will centre on how quality of school life of working students is *influenced* by other factors, in this study particularly related to work, parents, teachers and the school as institution. Relevant theories supporting the findings are brought into the discussion.

5.1. What is Quality of School Life for Working Students?

Based on the students' own experiences and perceptions themes were developed which led to the exhaustive descriptions of different aspects perceived to contribute to school life quality. The themes are expressed through statements given by the students themselves: 1) *"The good teachers devote themselves"*; 2) *"Some do not understand our conditions"*; 3) *"I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge"*; 4) *"It is known that we Ethiopians are very poor, so compared to that the school is very good"*. The discussion of these themes will be related to Tangen's (1998) four dimensions, which are the following: 1) *Dimension of Time*; 2) *Relations to Others*; 3) *Dimension of Work (Content)*; 4) *Control of One's own School Life*. In the following it will be discussed how these dimensions support the findings of my study.

5.1.1. Dimension of Time

"I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge" is a statement that expresses what the students seem to like about school. They say

knowledge is important because it gives them the opportunity to improve their lives through getting education. Education is important for their future lives as they assume and hope it will give them the opportunity to get a profession that will bring them out of a difficult situation caused by poverty.

To look at education in this perspective of being something useful for the future is an instrumental way to look upon education. It is a tool or an instrument to obtain a job and a good life. In this perspective there is an element of time, which brings me to the *Dimension of Time* referred to in Tangen's study as one basic dimension of life quality. Time is a basic dimension in the lives of human beings and not only relevant for school life. From the present situation we look into the past and interpret it related to the future – and the other way round. The students in my research have a strong hope for a better future life and education is the solution. Hence focus is much on the future, but related to their situation here and now.

In this connection it might be useful to refer to a distinction between future utility values of education which may be referred to as instrumental and on the other hand the intrinsic value of education and knowledge. Most of the students in the study by Tangen considered the future utility value of education as more important than its intrinsic value. However, what Tangen found interesting and surprising was how future and present dimensions seem to be connected and that this might indicate that from students' perspective we talk about only one dimension: Their school life is at the same time "here and now and in – or rather: for – the future".

The students in my research do not explicitly express the intrinsic value of education and knowledge. They, however, focus on the importance of the way teachers teach, how they follow up, how they care for the students and encourage them to do their best. This will help them to get good results, which is necessary in order to be promoted to secondary school. The content in itself seems not to be of importance, but to get good results on the monthly tests are in the focus of the students as well as the teachers. So it is important for the future. On the other hand good results, as the students say, bring about self-esteem, positive personality and it makes them happy

and respected by their teachers, classmates and parents. These are examples of what the students experience here and now in their daily life at school and are aspects of their school life that gives it an intrinsic value. So also in my research we may see the duality; how present and future seems to be closely connected.

The importance of getting knowledge and education is an attitude my students meet in their nearest environment, first of all among their teachers. In the interviews with them as well as with the principals they express the importance of raising awareness of the benefit of getting education. Their concern is first of all related to the future utility value of education. The school considers it as essential not only to tell the students, but also use every opportunity to tell their parents. Taking a look at the school as an institution, its perspective is very much directed towards the future. In the Education and Training Policy one of the general objectives is

“...to cultivate the cognitive, creative, productive and appreciative potential of citizens by appropriately relating education to environmental and societal needs” (MOE; 1994).

On one hand education should develop the students for future life; on the other hand they should be developed according to the needs of the society.

As the students in my research live under economically disadvantaged conditions education is to them and their environment a way of getting the opportunity to improve their lives. In this way hope is created for a better future. What is the probability for a better future? What is done on macro level by the authorities? Are students educated to unemployment? Is getting education the only way out of poverty? These are many questions and this research does not answer them.

However, as raising awareness of the importance of education is so much in focus, one may wonder if some of the students develop unrealistic expectations. There might be a gap between the present reality and their future dreams. Some of my student informants expressed wishes for the future that seemed unrealistic. For the students, however, these wishes are perceived as real. It is an interpretation of their future opportunities made here and now in a particular context. Therefore it is

important that the future promises given are meaningful for the students. They should perceive them as real and obtainable.

The challenge for the school as institution lies in taking care of the whole person “here and now” from the perspective of the best interest of the child. This principle is at the very heart of the child-centred perspective which is influenced by modern ideas of human rights and human development (CRC; 1991). It understands children to be resilient as well as vulnerable, to be capable as well as inexperienced, to have a variety of capacities as well as learning needs and to be active rather than passive agents in their development (Myers, 2001).

As discussed and argued above present and future is closely linked together. Related to students’ quality of school life this study wants to point at the importance of what is offered here and now as that is assumed to be the bases for the students to learn and develop and hence create possibilities for a good life in the future.

5.1.2. Relations to Others

The students’ perception of the relationship between themselves and the teachers is among the most essential findings of my study. This is expressed through the statement: **“The good teachers devote themselves”**. The students describe how teachers show care by praising, encouraging, appreciating, helping, listening, laughing with them and treating them with respect. They also say it is important for them that the teachers understand their situation and their conditions or their reality. Care and positive interaction provide a safe environment for the students. Then they feel relaxed and free to participate actively, which is basic in order to promote learning and development. According to Rye (2001) one of the most important requirements for the students is that they feel secure and that they enjoy at school and in the classroom. In such an atmosphere the students will learn and develop both socially and emotionally. Care and communication related to Ryes eight principles of his ICDP programme is further discussed in a later subchapter.

The students emphasize how important it is for them that the teachers help them and listen to them in order to be understood. They like to be treated with respect. They say this helps them to build up their self-confidence. Educators know that communication is an important factor in the development of self-identity. Tangen refers to Habermas (Tangen, 1998) who states that it is through communication – when it is directed towards understanding each other - that social norms develop which are necessary for social integration and development of personal identity.

The students in Tangen's study also emphasize the importance of care, of students and teachers being friendly to each other, and that teachers are concerned about the students. This indicates that positive and supportive relations between people in their closest surroundings are an important dimension when considering quality of life. In Tangen's study this dimension is referred to as *Relation to Others*. Tangen discusses whether good relations to others are the only factor that creates good quality of life. In a study by Mastekaasa (1998) it is indicated that having a good life quality and a good social network may be a result of personality. Good life quality may not only be the result either of your social network or of personality. Tangen mentions a third factor, which is interaction. She found this view to be supported by LeCompte and Preissle (1992). In studies conducted about students' school life it was revealed how the language used by the teachers and the way they behave influence on students' attitudes and behaviour. The positive attitudes towards teachers expressed by my students seem to be a result of the way they and the teachers interact and that this positive interaction contributes to the quality of their school life.

The students in my research also describe the unprofessional teacher, which is indicated by the theme: **“Some do not understand our conditions”**. They say when teachers do not do what is expected of them the students become sad. The students tell there are some teachers who do not care about the work the students do, they do not follow up or check their homework properly. Neither do they care about being on time to class and are not interested whether the students are absent. Their work is limited to what is absolutely necessary. This shows lack of communication and

interaction between teacher and student. The students say this may create negative feelings towards the school and some start to hate it. Some may refuse to attend certain classes. This will influence on their academic achievement and consequently spoil their education. This contributes negatively to the quality of the students' school life. The impression given by these teachers is that the work the students should do is not important, and the students' perception is that the teachers are not serious in their profession and not interested in the needs of the students. The teachers' attitude is that they do not care whether the students do their work or not, in what way they do it or whether they attend class or not. It must be assumed that this attitude from the teacher influences and reduce the quality of the students' work. This will be further discussed in the next section related to the *Dimension of Work (Content)*. Here shall only be mentioned that students in Tangen's study expressed that it was important to do something real, something that they experienced as serious and that would "make a difference". That "difference" could be to get a good or better grade. In this context relating it to the relationship to the teachers it might be said that their ability to "see" the students "here and now" "makes a difference".

5.1.3. Dimension of Work (Content)

One of the four dimensions in Tangen's research concerns the subjects taught in the school and their content and is referred to as *Dimension of Work (Content)*. Work in this connection is limited only to the work related to school. The students in Tangen's study expressed that it was important to do something real, something that they experienced as serious and important and that would "make a difference". That "difference" could be to get a good or better grade, jfr. instrumental value. I have already mentioned that the students in my research expressed that it was important to do their best and get good results (jfr "**I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge**"). Another aspect mentioned in Tangen's study that would make a difference was when the students took part in creating something which was considered to be useful, practical or beautiful, something that had its value here and now. These were mostly practical tasks, but working with theoretical

subjects could also be experienced as doing something worthwhile. It has to be mentioned that these students had vocational subjects, which is not the case with the students of my research. By some of my students it was expressed that they would like more practical subjects such as art, music and handicraft. From grade 7 they are taught only theoretical subjects. It seems as if the curriculum emphasizes theoretical knowledge rather than practical and aesthetic ones. By focusing on the traditional handicraft traditions of the area, however, one might assume that this could contribute to making some students more satisfied and hence affect the quality of their school life.

Do the students of my research experience the theoretical knowledge as something that has its value here and now? The knowledge the students get are mainly from their textbooks. They refer to the books as the “source of knowledge”. They express satisfaction with their books and are happy when they get one book each. I am not quite sure how important learning and gaining knowledge in itself is, jfr. intrinsic value. Some of the students said they asked questions about the content and challenged the teacher to get a discussion about what was written in the books. On the other hand most of them accepted the content of the books as “the truth”. As one said: “*What is written is science*”. The answers from the students indicate that the most important is to learn and prepare for the monthly test so that they can get a good result. That makes education meaningful. This aspect is in line with what is already mentioned as the instrumental value of education.

The *Dimension of Work* may be said to refer to the students’ experiences about the content of what school offers. How students experience and perceive the content and the tasks they are given at school is important. They may like what they do while they are doing it because it is experienced as something meaningful. On the other hand what they do and learn may sometimes be experienced as irrelevant or boring, but as long as it is experienced as useful for the future the schoolwork seem to have a positive value.

5.1.4. Control of One's own School Life

The following statement **“It is known that we Ethiopians are very poor, so compared to that the school is very good”** by one of the students indicate that their situation must be accepted as it is. There are conditions beyond themselves on which they have no opportunity to affect. This may be related to the dimension *Control of One's own School Life*. Her study identified a relationship between the students' expectations for the future as they are connected to the students' perception of their own opportunities to influence on their school life. These perceived opportunities relate to the perception of the conditions offered by the school. Factors mentioned by the students in my research that may be said to be beyond their control are the physical conditions mentioned such as classrooms, the compound, the number of students in class, the dust and the toilets, all of which are frame factors affecting the opportunities the school has to offer quality education. Several of these factors also must be assumed to influence on the well being of the students and hence on the quality of their school life. These factors are dependent on money allocated to the school. This will be discussed further in a later subchapter. To what extent there is an awareness of control or lack of control among the students related to their own school life this study does not answer.

5.1.5. Summary

I have found the dimensions from Tangen's research to be relevant in developing the understanding of the concept of quality of school life also for the working students in my research.

The perception students have of their school life is created here and now. It is a result of an interpretation of what they experience, what they have experienced and how they perceive their future opportunities. The discussion on the dimension of time shows the students' orientation towards the future. The knowledge they get is perceived as positive because it gives hope for a good life in the future. The perception of the schoolwork being positive is also related to getting good results

from which they will benefit in the future. Simultaneously they give meaning to their present experiences through their relation to others, particularly their teachers. The most essential factors contributing to quality of their school life seem to be the caring interaction between teacher and student and the devoted teacher, both being factors performed here and now.

As discussed and argued in this subchapter present and future is closely linked together. Related to students' quality of school life this study points at the importance of what is offered here and now as this is the bases for the students to learn and develop and hence create possibilities for a good life in the future. The hope is that this aspect is considered as important as the Ethiopian educational authorities are about to implement the Special Needs Education Program Strategy (MOE, 2006).

As this study also includes dimensions that are assumed to influence on the school life of the students they will be discussed from an ecological and curriculum perspective in the next sub chapter.

5.2. Influence on Students' Quality of School Life

In the previous subchapter I have discussed how the four themes express aspects considered to be important for the quality of students' school life. In the following the discussion will focus on how work, parents and school influence on their school life. I will discuss the findings from the interviews with my informants related to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, to Johnsen's Curriculum Model, and to Rye's ICDP program, all referred to in chapter two. The school as an institution operates within a framework consisting of several factors among which socio-economic and cultural frame factors, human resources, and physical and economical factors are most relevant to this study in addition to the aspect of communication and care.

5.2.1. Work as Socio-Economic Frame Factor for School Life Quality

Work may be seen as a frame factor from a socio economic as well as from a cultural point of view. In the following subchapter the socio economic aspects of work will be discussed. In this research the students' work and the working conditions constitutes an important part in their lives. In planning of educational activities at school level, referred to as micro level, the teachers should be aware of the students' background in order to be able to identify needs and solutions.

Findings in my study show that it is typical for the students from this area of Addis Ababa to work in addition to attending school. That is the case for 94%. With reference to the Child Labour Survey Report (2001) mentioned in chapter 1 the percentage for Addis Ababa is 68,3%. Compared to this, the amount of students working in my study is considerably higher (94%). This could be explained by the fact that it is an area of Addis Ababa where people live in low economic conditions. Therefore it may be assumed that the families need assistance from their children to add to the income. Hence "learning and earning" seems to be a common phenomenon. Further findings show that the students in my research were doing different kinds of work out of which the dominant activities are within household chores. In addition to being engaged in the household there are some in weaving and pottery. Other kind of working activities they do at home are metal- and wood work, assisting parents with various jobs, serve as waitress or shopkeeper, go to the flour mill or "whatever jobs assigned for me". These all represent work common to the informal sector as shown in the research in one of the woredas in Addis Ababa (FOCUS on Children at Risk, 2000).

The main reason for working mentioned by the students themselves is that they have to assist their family. The reasons for having to assist may vary from the positive attitude of helping to the more negative obligation. The obligation to work seems to vary according to the economic situation of the family. Adding to an already strained economic situation is the fact that there are certain school expenses that have to be

covered by the parents, e.g. uniforms, books and some school material. Parents also have to contribute when new school buildings are constructed. This is according to a cost – share principle which is a political decision made on macro-level. From this it can not be claimed that education is free. As many of the parents live in low socio economic conditions the dilemma for some of them is between the demand for help from their children to contribute to the income of the family and the need for the children to attend school. This is a situation in which the families seem to be stuck.

It seems as if the school has succeeded in raising awareness about the importance of education. Among the students as well as the parents education is perceived to be the way out of a life characterized by poverty. This is clearly expressed in the interviews by several of the informants. The teachers and the principals seem to use every opportunity to focus on the importance of education which reflects the educational policy of the country, which aims at offering basic education for all as a means to reduce poverty and improve socio economic conditions of the society. As discussed earlier the students say they like school because that is a place to gain knowledge. In education they see hopes and opportunities for the future and it is a way to get out of poverty (jfr. Dimension of Time).

Is education the only solution or is it possible to combine work and education? In one of the previous studies conducted in Addis Ababa (Focus on Children at Risk, 2000) the children mentioned that it has been able to learn and advance in their studies by combining learning and working. Working makes it possible to pay the expenses related to education such as school uniforms and different kinds of necessary materials. As this research shows there is a close connection between the economic status of the family and their opportunity to prioritize education for their children. So in order for the parents to be able to send their children to school they need them to contribute to the income of the family.

It is also argued among researchers that work is not necessarily negative, but may also be meaningful and constructive. The study “How Children See their World” (Pineda, 1997) indicates that work does not mean suffering as more than half of the

working students said they like work. One fourth said they feel useful and important because of work. This may further indicate that work can increase children's sense of responsibility and build their self-esteem and self-confidence. From the study of child labour in informal sector in Addis Ababa some informants that like work say work makes them self confident and that they have been able to "learn and advance in their studies by combining learning and working". Self confidence and self esteem are indicators of psychosocial well-being which is acquired through feeling competent in what they do and feeling their activities are valued. Relating this to school it will be their task to identify the background conditions of the students in order to meet their needs.

5.2.2. Work as Cultural Frame Factor for School Life Quality

Work may also be looked upon as a cultural frame factor. As focused on in this study parents, school as well as work are the settings in the immediate environment of the students that is assumed to influence on their development. Related to the ecological model attitudes are found as one of several settings reflecting values of the society. As stated by Rye (2001)

"...human development always takes place in a social and cultural context where children and adolescents absorb, modify and reshape for their own frame of reference the personal attitudes, perceptions, values, and self reflection of those around them."

Therefore it becomes important how attitudes of the society is reflected in laws and regulations and further how those are in accordance with the attitudes of parents, teachers and the school as institution.

My findings reveal different attitudes to work. Among the parents work is for some only an obligation. One father says work is "nothing to love – nothing to hate, work is a matter of survival, a way of life and she has to make it." Those families who are able to let their children give priority to their schoolwork also express positive attitudes to work. They emphasize that they like their children to help them in the house, but it should not be too much. The teachers and the principals do not condemn

work in itself, but when work becomes too much for the students it will affect them negatively. On the other hand they show a positive attitude to work in itself as something that may give practice in a profession or work, make them independent and develop their capacity to run their own business.

How work influence on the students' school life must be assumed to depend partly on how students themselves perceive work. We see from my research that most of the students like to work. Some are proud of the work they are doing, they like to help and they are encouraged and praised by their parents. On the other hand those who dislike work perceive work as an obligation. Seen from a context where children's work is valued and respected, their feelings of self worth are likely to be enhanced. If, however, work is harmful or inappropriate to their age or too much for what a child can handle or they see no future prospects or they are stigmatized for what they do, it may constitute a negative impact on their educational as well as on their psychosocial wellbeing. It would be appropriate in this connection to raise the question: When does work become harmful and who is going to identify when work is harmful?

To view works' influence on students' school life from what they themselves perceive is one perspective. Another one is to look at what is stated in laws and regulations as harmful to children. One should have in mind the rights stated in the CRC where article 32 states that a child should be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or physical or psycho-social development. The convention intends to promote a holistic view of children and one of CRC's most fundamental provisions requires that

"...in all actions concerning children....the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration".

The Constitution of Ethiopia provides the protection of children from child labour in its Article 36. The existence of child labour is recognized in Ethiopia as a problem and is regulated by laws which states child labour as legally condemned. The law defines a certain minimum age and particular work as hazardous. This is in accordance with the ILO Conventions No. 138 and 182. In my study most of the

work done by the students would probably not be identified as illegal. However, it is very possible that it would be considered as harmful related to the definition stated by MOLSA(2002). The law in Ethiopia has set the minimum age to be 14, according to the ILO Convention No. 138. The 8 grade students in this research are from 14 and up to 18. This is an age group which according to The Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003 of Ethiopia is classified as a young worker whom to some extent are allowed to do work which is considered as non-hazardous and has no

“detrimental effect to their safety, health and developmental prospects”.

Who should be the ones to identify when work is harmful? According to the Labour Proclamation it is stated that Labour Inspection Services should be established to monitor the provisions related to child labour. Both studies from Addis Ababa about child labour referred to in chapter two suggest that community groups should be established to monitor child labour focusing especially on education and awareness raising. Relating this to my research there are four important actors, namely the students themselves, their parents, the teachers and the school as institution. They all mention examples of harmful work; however, I am not sure how aware they are of the rights and the best interest of the students. It seems as if the school has no routines on identifying or focusing on harmful work. My research found that there is great diversity among the students related to the impact work has on their school life. As some kind of work is the every day reality of the students of my study it is of interest to identify to what extent school is aware of their conditions. The knowledge, the attitudes and the perceptions the teachers and the principals have is therefore important. My research shows the school has no exact information about the work the students do. It is based partly on assumptions. In planning teachers need exact information about the students in order to define goals, content and methods as it is illustrated in the Curriculum Model (Johnsen, 2001). The teachers say it would be important for them to know about those who work. That would make it possible for the teachers to meet their needs and to find good solutions. Solutions also have to be

based on a thorough understanding among teachers of the complexity of the reasons why students work in particular contexts.

One important factor to understand is the cultural setting of the student. I have earlier described how weaving and pottery activities dominate in this area. It is therefore surprising that so few said they were involved in these activities. Teachers told me that this group of people has been stigmatized and that the work they do is of little value. Therefore an explanation could be as some teachers indicated that the students are ashamed of telling about it. If they feel ashamed of the work they do, that may also be one of the harmful effects of work. This has to do with cultural norms and how those norms are mediated within the family of the student. Historically there are strong traditions linked to these handicrafts. Therefore taking account of context and mediation is important, especially in helping understand how the students and their parents and also school feel about the work and the place it holds in their development. This draws attention to the interdependencies between different areas of the students' lives as stated by Bronfenbrenner. It is a challenge for the school to become aware of the cultural context of their students. It is interesting, however, to notice how both principals are proud of their initiative to build a house where the students can learn about and practice weaving and pottery. They say that the students need to know their area and to appreciate their culture and their traditions. Through weaving the school can teach about traditional Ethiopian clothes and put in their mind "ethiopianism" as one of the principals expressed it. The school's concern about transmitting positive attitudes about the local conditions is reflected in the ETP (Education and Training Policy). There it is stated about the curriculum that textbooks should give due attention to concrete local conditions. The idea is found as well among the specific objectives of the ESS (Education Sector Strategy):

"...to provide education that promotes the culture of respect for work, positive work habits and high regard for workmanship".

Cultural aspects are also emphasized in the CRC (Convention on the Rights of The Child):

"Thus, the curriculum must be of direct relevance to the child's social, cultural, environmental and economic context".

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (OAU1999) as well takes into consideration the virtues of the cultural heritage, historical background and values of the African civilization. The weaving place at school aims at developing the ability and creativity of the students. It may seem that the school in this way aspires at making the curriculum relevant to the local conditions, something that is embedded in the national objectives.

This initiative must be assumed to contribute to changing the prevailing negative attitudes to these local traditions and raise awareness of the importance of local traditions and how they play a role in creating cultural identity. The principals mentioned that the parents used to have negative attitudes to this kind of work and the students were reluctant to say they are involved in weaving and pottery, which indicates that they seem to be influenced by this negative attitude. If introducing weaving as an activity in the school is to be perceived as meaningful and useful for the students it also depends on the attitudes of their closest environment. This further points at the necessity of developing cooperation between teachers, parents and the students themselves, all of them important human resources related to students' school life quality.

5.2.3. Human Resources as a Frame Factor for School Life Quality

Teachers as a Human Resource. Qualified human resources are crucial in the development of quality education. The findings of this study reveal the importance of the teacher in contributing to the quality of the students' school life (jfr. Relation to Others), academically, socially as well as psycho-socially.

Part of the professional work of the school is to change the intentions of the educational policy into concrete and manageable goals through adapting them to the needs of the students. The challenge however for the school is to act in a way that makes the school into what may be described as the "students' ally". This concept is

used by Tangen (1998). Referring to the descriptions given by the students in my research about teachers who encourage, praise, appreciate, listen and help one may assume that the students perceive the teachers as their allies. The concept “educational ally” means that the teachers and the students work towards the same goals and that the teacher is there to support and help the student when necessary. The good teachers as they are described by the students see their responsibility as an “ally”. Those who do not act as allies will make the students feel insecure. At the same time the teachers express lack of knowledge about how to meet the needs of the students. Lack of adequate knowledge on the issue of special needs is stated by Belew (2005) in his study in the same school.

The question then arises if the existing teacher education is good enough. The educational qualifications of teachers in the first cycle (grade 1-4 of primary school) are high school completion + one year college training (10+1). One or two years of further college training promote teachers to second cycle. This means that teaching of the crucial first years of children’s education is offered by teachers with the shortest professional education. In addition they are young and lack experience.

The authorities have acknowledged that one of the prerequisites to improve the quality of education is to upgrade the competence of the existing teachers through in-service courses as well as increase the number of teachers (ESS, 1994). That means that existing teacher training institutions have to expand and new ones have to be built which is now the case in Ethiopia. Most of the teachers at the school were attending different courses in order to upgrade their competence. The question is, however, what kind of courses are offered and are they relevant to the knowledge needed related to give the students a good quality of school life? The content of teacher education shall not be discussed here. It is, however, worthwhile to mention that the curriculum model is a suitable tool for considering the different aspects to be included in a teacher education program. This is a model considering all aspects within educational planning and which has the student at its centre, which means focus is on the needs and the best interest of the child itself.

Parents as a Human Resource. As mentioned the teachers are the professionals in the scholastic work. This work, however, need input from the parents. We know that school exists to bring about learning and development, which can only take place in close cooperation with parents and the home environment. Then the question arises if the parents see a need of cooperating with the school as a way to contribute to a good school life for their children. Another question is whether the school and the teachers see parents as a resource in their effort to create a good school life for the students.

The teachers expressed through the interviews advantages of cooperating more closely with the parents. They mentioned it would be useful to get information about the students' school work, about the family situation, their level of education, their economic status and their values, interests and attitudes to education. They also see the importance of giving information to the parents related to their academic performance. What is revealed in this study is that the teachers need information about the students' background. When students say *that "some teachers do not understand their conditions"* that indicates lack of knowledge and understanding about the students' situation. From this it may be concluded that there is a need of assessment meaning assessing the students' conditions in order to identify their needs.

The most important source of information is of course the student. They should be encouraged to take part in a dialogue about their education and even more important, teachers and parents need to listen to what their interests and priorities are. However, the parents are essential partners in assessing their children's needs and interests. According to the teachers the parents are *"actually not involved"*. There are two formal meetings with all the parents twice a year. These meetings are mostly characterized by one way information. Apart from this parents are called to school when there are problems. The parents therefore say that they are happy not to be contacted because that means no problem. Lack of a tradition of cooperation between school and parents makes the parents just accept the situation as it is. The challenge now lies partly in the hands of the school as an institution to bring about a change.

The school and the teachers have the responsibility to establish a good cooperative relationship adjusted to the relevant needs of parents, students and the school. This could be referred to as a partnership with the parents. The ICDP's interaction qualities (Rye, 2001) are found to be successfully adapted for teacher-parent cooperation. This is documented in a study conducted among parents and students in Sarajevo (Varunek, 2006).

From a cultural point of view there is no tradition that parents take the initiative to contact the school. From a study conducted in the same project school as mine findings show that the general perception is that cooperation between school and parents is unsatisfactory (Abebech, 2005). Moreover the study showed that there is a self-perception among the parents of inadequateness partly because of lack of education. There is a Parent-Teacher Association which should cater for the interests of the parents, but its matters are limited to controlling finances, participating in evaluation of teachers and to disciplinary issues.

Whatever the background of the parents, they need to be met at their level and raise their awareness of the importance of their role as resource persons in the rearing of their children and how their interaction with their children at home affects their children's well-being and social and academic development. There is a need to facilitate for increased time for parent-teacher cooperation with the aim to share information and experiences in order to offer the best solution according to the needs of the students.

5.2.4. Physical and Economical Frame Factors related to School Life Quality

The school buildings and its surroundings belong to what may be called physical frame-factors. Mentioned by the students are classrooms, the compound, the number of students in class, the dust and the toilets. It seems as if this aspect was not too important when considering what contributes to their school life. From my point of view with experience from Norwegian classrooms I had expected that they had found

their classrooms to be too crowdie. But they did not. The teachers, however, find that as a barrier as it limits their opportunities to take care of their students in a satisfactory way. Also related to the need of cooperation with the parents discussed in the previous section the number of students in the class constitutes a barrier, as individual parent meetings become difficult to organize. According to informal information from the school administration the aim is to reduce the number of students to 50. We know how important it is for every student to be seen and to learn in a safe learning and teaching environment. Is it at all possible to manage to give quality education under those conditions? The teachers need to develop knowledge about how to organize classes in order to obtain the best possible educational conditions within the existing frame factors.

Otherwise they find the school compound nice with a garden with beautiful trees and flowers. It gives opportunity for the students to play and to relax during the breaks. The factor mentioned by the students as the one in particular affecting their life at school in a negative way was the toilet conditions. They were described as “shabby, not clean and with an unpleasant smell”. Are decent sanitary conditions a basic human right? If the answer is yes, the authorities face a huge challenge in improving toilets in all schools.

The money allocated for the school through the budget is not enough. The lack of teaching materials and equipment for the laboratory is one example. The physical conditions mentioned above reflect political and administrative considerations and priorities on macro level. They influence on educational opportunities and also create barriers for the individual student, the classes, the teachers and the school.

According to international conventions education should be free. In Ethiopia that is not yet the case. In the ESS an objective is that the community should participate in the financing of education as well as introducing cost-share mechanisms. On the background of the existing poverty of the majority of the people this affects the families and the students directly. One example is the contribution to the new school building. For each student the parents contribute with 10 birr per month for one year

(Ahmed, 2006). One of the students complained about this as well as one of the parents. They could not manage. Moreover the principals say they are dependent on NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations) to get necessary equipment. Sometimes the teachers and even the students contribute to support those students who can not afford to buy the school uniform or their exercise books.

All the above mentioned aspects of the curriculum model need to be considered by school authorities and politicians as they all must be assumed to contribute to the quality of school life for students in general, not only working students.

5.2.5. Care and Communication related to School Life Quality

According to Rye (2001) one of the most important requirements for students to thrive at school, learn, and develop socially and emotionally, is that they feel secure and enjoy being at school and in the classroom. When describing the teacher's role they said it is their task to create a good school life for the students. The lessons should be enjoyable. That would make the students come to school. As many of the students are forced to work many hours at home they do not have much time to enjoy at home. One teacher said: "If you do your best then you attract the students".

The eight principles developed as guidelines to create positive interaction and communication point at aspects that are also mentioned by the students as well as teachers as important for a good school life. Hence the principles of the ICDP program support the findings of my research, as the following examples will show. The good teachers show that they care and try to understand their conditions. They are concerned about their development academically as well as socially. They say they try within the existing frames to have a variety of teaching methods and to encourage students to express own opinions. The students themselves say they are praised when they do their best. They mention to be encouraged, praised, seen, understood, acknowledged and respected as important in order for them to feel relaxed and free to participate in the class. Both teachers and students emphasize the importance of having good knowledge about the subject being taught and the skill of

teaching. That means the teacher will involve himself/herself more personally. At the same time their focus is on transmitting attitudes and values and some teachers also underline how they try to relate to local conditions when presenting a new topic. One of the principles focuses on helping the students to achieve self-discipline. One way is for the teachers to be clear and predictable. Another way is to involve the students themselves. One student gave an example on how the class had participated in making rules and regulations for the class in order to improve the class environment. They had succeeded in making the students more responsible. All these examples show that teachers are aware of their role as a caring person and they seem to do their best within the existing frame factors some of which have already been discussed.

However, teachers' skills in care and communication are of fundamental importance for the whole educational process and, I dare say, the main factor contributing to quality of school life for the students.

5.4. Conclusions

Related to the findings, to theories and previous research I have tried to develop what may contribute to quality of school life for working students and have come up with some main conclusions.

The ultimate aim of this study has been to contribute to knowledge development about the phenomenon *quality of school life* for working students in Ethiopia, and to investigate what kind of work they do and how it may influence on their school life. Further the study has focused on the students' nearest environment– especially parents and teachers – in order to investigate how they may influence on the students' school life. Since their school life can not be fully understood unless it is seen from their perspective the study is based on the students' own experiences. My main argument in conducting this study was that knowledge and understanding of the students' lives at school and their nearest environment is assumed to provide the school with important information enabling the school to adapt its educational

activities according to the needs of this specific group of students, and hence, improve the quality of the school life for working students. In particular the concept is discussed related to dimensions from previous research conducted by Tangen (1998): *Dimension of Time, Relation to Others, Dimension of Work (Content) and Control of one's own School Life.*

The students regard their school life as positive or negative related to how they perceive their relation to the teachers. The students have pointed out the importance of the devoted teacher, the one that understands their conditions. Teachers' interaction characterised by care, understanding and positive communication is perceived by the students as the most important aspect contributing to the quality of their school life. I found that the dimension of time was important as the students relate their present situation to expectations for the future. The importance of knowledge and education is clearly expressed as giving opportunities for a better life in the future and a way to escape from the poverty in which many of them are stuck. The dimension of content has a positive value when the students perceive the "work" they do at school as something meaningful. For my students meaning that they learn something. As one student said: "I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge". The school work is related to future as it may be regarded as an "instrument" to achieve a better life or to avoid problems in the future. Work seems to affect students' school life differently depending on how every student perceive their work, such as level of obligation, the amount of work, the nature of the work and whether they like or dislike it.

With knowledge revealed in this study about the great diversity among the group of working students the school and the teachers should listen to the students to understand and to get knowledge about their conditions in order to improve and secure the quality of their school life. Teachers and the school are in this study referred to as the *students' allies*. This means they should have common goals relating to working students' quality of school life. One strategy to achieve that is to listen to the voice of the students. It seems to be a need of developing knowledge and

strategies in order to identify the conditions under which working students live. This means offering education within special needs, particularly related to assessment.

The study emphasizes the teacher as the main resource contributing to the quality of school life for the students. As the students point at care, positive communication and understanding as main aspects it must be necessary to raise awareness about how care and positive communication affect the interaction between students and teachers.

The study reveals lack of cooperation between school and parents. Offering the parents to be more involved in a partnership with the school would probably contribute to increased understanding of the students' conditions and hence contribute to improved quality of school life for the students. Such cooperation would have to involve the students themselves as well.

Hopefully this study may contribute to increase focus on quality of school life for working students "here and now" as that may be considered as one major factor contributing to creating opportunities for a better life in the future.

5.5. Recommendations

From the findings and the discussion the following recommendations are suggested.

The students have pointed out the importance of the teachers understanding their conditions. In order to achieve that, teachers need to develop knowledge about assessment strategies. Therefore all teachers should be offered summer courses and/or in-service courses within the field of assessment. It is vital to develop a common understanding of the concept *assessment*.

Assessment is one of several aspects of the Curriculum Relation Model presented in chapter 2 in this study. This model is a suitable frame in planning education not only for individual students, but also for groups, whole classes and for the school as institution. Its focus is on aspects needed to be considered in all educational planning.

Knowledge about this model should be offered to teachers, teacher training institutions and to educational management on different levels.

The study emphasizes the importance of the teacher as the main resource contributing to quality of the school life of the students. This point at the need of improved quality of teacher education focusing particularly on special needs education and inclusion.

The study shows the need of raising awareness about the importance of school and parents as mutual partners working together for the best interest of the students. A partnership organisation needs to take the initiative to establish routines for developing a closer cooperation/partnership between school and the parents of the students. The already existing teacher - parent association should be given the responsibility to initiate this work.

Child labour issues are focused on in national laws and regulations. These issues need to be the responsibility of different involved parties of the local community. Hence cooperation should be established within education, health and social sector on sub city and kebele level in order to identify working conditions and meet the needs of working students. They should all be educated about existing legislation on child labour on national as well as international level.

Addressing the school as institution in particular, awareness should be raised among key stakeholders about the rights and regulations of working students. Important groups to target are the working students themselves, their parents, teachers and school authorities as well as policy makers.

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Appendix 1: Letter from the University of Oslo



**UNIVERSITY
OF OSLO**

Department of Special Needs Education

P.O.Box 1140, Blindern
N-0318 Oslo
NORWAY

Your ref:
Our ref: 06/05 BHA/db
Contact person: Denese Brittain d.a.brittain@isp.uio.no

Visiting address:
Helga Eng's Building
3rd and 4th floor

Date: June 14, 2005

Telephone: + 47 22 85 80 59
Telefax: + 47 22 85 80 21

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that **JAAVALL, Inger Marie Halvorsrud**, date of birth 26.10.1952, is a full-time student pursuing a course of study at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo, Norway, leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education (M. Phil. SNE).

This is a continuous two-year programme run on the "sandwich" principle, which involves periods of study and field work/research in both Norway and the home country. The student has concluded the initial 11-month period in Norway and will be returning to the home country in July 2005 to continue full-time studies/research until 1 January 2006 when s/he returns to Norway for the final part of the degree. The period of study will be completed at the end of May 2006.

The main responsibility for supervising the research, developmental work and thesis remains with the Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, Norway. However, we would kindly request that the relevant authorities give the student the access required to the schools and educational establishments necessary in order to undertake field work and research. We would also be most grateful for any assistance that is afforded to the student which enables her/him to carry out this work, particularly the use of facilities such as access to telephone, fax, e-mail, computer services and libraries at the various educational establishments.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Berit Helene Johnsen (dr.scient.)
Academic Head of International Master's Programme
Department of Special Needs Education

Institutt for spesialpedagogikk
Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet
Universitetet i Oslo
Norge

Department of Special Needs Education
Faculty of Education
University of Oslo, Norway

Appendix 2: Invitation Letter

የአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የትምህርት ትምህርት
ድ/ር ድ/ር
የትምህርት ትምህርት



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Dean's Office
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

August 27, 2005

Invitation Letter

College of Education of Addis Ababa University is glad to invite Marie Jaavall of University of Oslo, Special Needs Department to undertake 3 months research in the Academic Year 2005/06. I will be ready to serve as your advisor during your stay in the country.

Thank you.

Tirussew Teferra, Ph.D
Professor of Special Needs Education
Dean, College of Education

Appendix 3: Application Letter for Permission



በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ትምህርት ቢሮ
የትምህርት ቢሮ
City Government of Addis Ababa
Education Bureau
Gulele Kifle Ketema
Education Department

ቁጥር ገ-ክክ/ት/መም/1217/35/98
ቀን 20/1/98

ለሚመለከተው ሁሉ

Miss. JAAVALL Inger Marie Halvorsrud ናርዌይ ውስጥ በሚገኘው የአስሎ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በልዩ ትምህርት የማስተርስ ዲግሪያቸውን እየሰሩ ይገኛሉ፡፡ በመሆኑም Miss. JAAVALL Inger Marie Halvorsrud የሚከታተሉትን የልዩ ፍላጎት ትምህርት የመመረቂያ ጽሑፍ ዝግጅት የሚረዳቸውን መረጃ ለማሰባሰብ እንዲችሉ በአናገተ በክፍል አባረላላው ትብብር እንደረግላቸው እንጠይቃለን፡፡



ከሠላምታ ጋር
Ömer
ጋሻው ካሜ ጋይሉ
የትምህርት ቢሮ መምሪያ ተ/ባሳፊ

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for Students in grade 8 - English

I would like to thank you for participating in this study. This study aims at finding out about how life is at school for those students who also work. The information you give is important in order to find out about this. I would like you to answer the following questions as correctly as possible. Among those of you answering this questionnaire some will be selected for an interview. All information you give will be treated confidentially and your answers will be used only for the purpose of this study.

Name.....

General Background Information

1. Gender:

Girl ☐ Boy ☐

2. Age:years old

Family

3. With whom do you live?

a) both your parents?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
b) your mother only?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
c) your father only?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
d) another caretaker?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

if yes, with whom?

.....

4. a) Do you have a brother/brothers Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If yes, how many.....

c) How old are they?.....

5. a) Do you have a sister/sisters? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If yes, how many?.....

c) How old are they?.....

School

6. When do you start school in the morning? At.....o'clock

7. When do you finish school in the afternoon? At.....o'clock

8. Do you get homework to do every day? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. a) Do you manage to do all your homework? Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐

b) If yes, how much time do you spend on doing your homework every day?

Less than 15 minutes ☐

Between 15 – 30 minutes ☐

Between 30 – 60 minutes ☐

More than 60 minutes ☐

c) If not, why don't you manage to do all your homework?

.....
.....
.....

10. a) Does it occur that you are absent from school?

never

☐

every week

☐

every two weeks

☐

every month

☐

b) If you are absent, what is your main reason?

ill

☐

have to work

☐

other reasons

☐

What?.....

11. a) Does it occur that you are late at school?

never

☐

every week

☐

every two weeks

☐

every month

☐

b) If you are late, what is the reason?.....

12. a) Do you like going to school?

Yes ☐

No ☐

b) Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

13. a) Is going to school important for you? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

.

14. What do you like about school?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. What do you dislike about school?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

16. What is your academic status/rank from your class ?

Work

17. a) Do you have working tasks when you are not at school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

b) at home ☐

c) outside home ☐

d) both ☐

e) If no, you may go to question 23.

18. What kind of work do you do?

.....

19. a) How many hours do you work every week?.....

b) What time do you work?

.....

.....

20. a) Do you earn money on your work? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If yes, how many birr per month?

.....

c) Who is paying you for the work you are doing?

.....

21. Why do you work? (choose one or more of the following alternatives)

I like working ☐

I want to earn money for myself ☐

My parents want me to work ☐

I have to earn money for my family ☐

I have to assist my family ☐

I want to learn a skill (e.g. weaving) ☐

Other reasons

.....
.....

22. Do you like the work you are doing ? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why, why not?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Spare time activities.

23. Do you spend time on any other activities apart from school and work?

yes ☐ no ☐

24. If yes, what kind of activities ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.

Future plans.

25. What are you going to do next year?

attend school

☐

What kind of school?

work

☐

What kind of work?

.....

...

☐

other choices

What?

.....

.....

.

26. What are your wishes for the future?

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 5: Questionnaire for Students in Grade 8 – Amharic

ሰፊና ክፍል ተማሪዎች የተዘጋጀ ታሰ መጠይቅ

በዚህ ጥናት ስለተሳተፉትህ ባመለካግኛችሁ እወዳለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት በራ አዋሪ የሚሰራ ተማሪዎችን የትምህርት ቤት አይወጥ ምን እንደሚመስል ለመረዳት አልሞ የተነሣ ነው። እናንተ የምትሰጡት መረጃም ይህን ጥናት ከግብ ለማድረስ እጅግ ጠቃሚ ነው። ስለዚህ ከዚህ በመቀጠል ያሉትን ጥያቄዎች በጥሞና ተረድታችሁ በትክክል እንድትመልሱ ትብብራችሁን አጠይቃለሁ።

በዚህ የጽሁፍ መጠይቅ ከምትሳተፉት መካከል የተወሰናችሁት ለቃለ-መጠይቅም ትመረጣላችሁ።

የምትሰጡት ማንኛውንም መረጃ በሚስጥር የሚያዝና ለዚህ ጥናት ብቻ የሚውል ነው።

ስም _____

ጠቅላላ መረጃ

1. ፆታ _____ ሴት ☐ ወንድ ☐

2. ዕድሜ _____ ዓመት

ቤተሰብ

3. የምትኖረው/ሪው ከሆነ ጋር ነው?

ሀ. ከእናትና አባቱ ጋር?	አዎ	<input type="checkbox"/>	አይደለም	<input type="checkbox"/>
ለ. ከእናቱ ጋር ብቻ?	አዎ	<input type="checkbox"/>	አይደለም	<input type="checkbox"/>
ሐ. ከአባቱ ጋር ብቻ?	አዎ	<input type="checkbox"/>	አይደለም	<input type="checkbox"/>
መ. ከሌላ አካል ጋር?	አዎ	<input type="checkbox"/>	አይደለም	<input type="checkbox"/>

ከሆነ ማን?

4. ሀ. ወንድም አለህ/ሽ? አዎ ☐ የለኝም ☐

ለ. ካለህ (ሽ) ስንት ነው-ናቸው _____

ሐ. ዕድሜያቸው ስንት ነው? _____

☐

5. ሀ. እህት አለህ/ሽ? አዎ ☐ የለኝም ☐

ለ. ካለህ/ህ ስንት ናቸው? _____

ሐ. ዕድሜያቸው ስንት ነው? _____

ትምህርት ቤት

6. በስንት ሰዓት ነው ጠዋት የምትጀምሩት? በ _____ ሰዓት

7. ከቀትር በኋላ ትምህርት በስንት ሰዓት ያልቃል? በ _____ ሰዓት

8. ሀ. የቤት ሥራ ሁሉ ይሰጣችኋል ወይ? አዎ ☐ አይሰጠንም ☐

ለ. መልስህ/ሽ አዎ ከሆነ ፣ የቤት ሥራ ለመስራት ምን ያህል ጊዜ ነው

9 ሀ. ሁሉንም የቤት ሥራ ትሠራለህ/ሽ?

አዎ ☐ አልሠራም ☐

ለ. መልስሽ/ህ አዎ እሰራለሁ ከሆነ የቤት ሥራ ለመስራት ምን ያህል ጊዜ ታጠፋለህ
/ታጠፈያለሽ?

ከ 15 ደቂቃ ያነሰ ☐

በ 15 ደቂቃና 30 ደቂቃ መካከል ☐

በ 30 ደቂቃና 1 ሰአት ☐

ከ 1 ሰአት የበለጠ ☐

ሐ. መልስሽ/ህ አልሰራም ከሆነ የቤት ስራ ላለመስራት ምክንያትህ/ሽ ምንድን ነው?

10 ሀ. ከት/ቤት የምትቀርቡት ጊዜ አለ? ካለ የምትቀረው/ረው

ቀርቼ አላውቅም ☐

በየሳምንቱ ነው ☐

በየሁለት ሳምንቱ ነው ☐

በወር ነው ☐

ለ. የምትቀረ/ር ከሆነ ለመቅረትሽ/ህ ዋናው ምክንያት ምንድን ነው?

ሕመም ☐

ሥራ ☐

ሌላ ምክንያት ☐ ምን ? _____

11. ሀ. ከት/ቤት አርፍደህ/ሽ ታውቂያለሽ/ህ?

አርፍጄ አላውቅም ☐ በየሳምንቱ ☐ በየሁለት ሳምንቱ ☐ በየወሩ
ሌላ ካለ..... ☐

ለ. የምታረፍድ/ጂ ከሆነ ምክንያትሽ/ህ ምንድን ነው?

12. ሀ. ትምህርት ቤት መሄድ ትወዳለህ/ሽ? አዎ ☐ አልወድም ☐

ለ. ለምን _____

13 ሀ. ትምህርት ቤት መሔድ ጠቃሚ ነው? አዎ ☐ አይደለም ☐

ለ. ለምን

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14. ት/ቤት በመሔድህ/ሽ የሚያስደስቱህ/ሽ ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው?

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15. ት/ቤት በመሔድህ/ሽ የማትወደው/ጂው ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው?.....

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16. የክፍል ደረጃህ/ሽ ስንት ነው?

17. ሀ. ከትምህርት ቤት ውጭ የሚጠብቅህ/ሽ ስራ አለ? ☐ አዎ ☐ የለም

መልስህ/ሽ «አዎ» ከሆነ ፣ ከምትሠራው/ራው የት ነው?

ሀ. ቤት ውስጥ ☐

ለ. ከቤት ውጭ ☐

ሐ. ቤትም ውጭም ☐

መ. መልስህ/ሽ «የለም» ከሆነ ወደ 23ኛ ጥያቄ ሂድ/ሂጅ

18. ምን አይነት ስራ ነው የምትሰራው/ራው? _____

19. ሀ. በሳምንት ምን ያህል ሰዓት ነው የምትሠራው/ራው? _____ ሰዓት

ለ. በሰዓት ሰአት ነው የምትሠራው/ራው?

20. ሀ. በምትሠራው/ራው ስራ ገንዘብ ይከፍልሃል? አዎ ☐ አይከፈለኝም ☐

ለ. «አዎ» ከሆነ መልስህ/ሽ በወር ምን ያክል ብር ይሆናል? _____

ሐ. ለምትሰራው/ራው ስራ ማን ነው የሚከፍልሽ/ህ? _____

21. ለምንድን ነው የምትሠራው/ራው? (ከሚከተሉት ምክንያቶች አንዱን ወይም ከአንድ

በላይ ምረጪ/ጥ ምክንያት/ቶች በሳጥኑ/ኖቹ ጭረት በማድረግ አመልክት/ቺ)

መስራት ስለምወድ ☐

ለራሴ ገንዘብ ማግኘት ስለምፈልግ ☐

ቤተሰቦቼ እንድሰራ ስለሚፈልጉ ☐

ለቤተሰቦቼ ገንዘብ ማግኘት ስላለብኝ ☐

ቤተሰቦቼን መርዳት ስላለብኝ ☐

ሙያ መማር ስለምፈልግ (ምሳሌ ሽመና) ☐

ሌላ ምክንያት ካለ _____

22. ሀ. ስራህን /ሺን ትወደዋለህ/ሽ?

ሀ. አዎ ☐ አልወደውም ☐

ለ. ለምን? _____

ትርፍ ጊዜ ማሳለፊያ

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23. ከት/ቤትና ከስራ ውጪ ለዝንባሌ የሚሆን በቂ ጊዜ አለሽ/አለህ?

አዎ ☐ የለኝም ☐

24. አዎ ከሆነ መልስህ/ሽ ፣ ምን በማድረግ ትርፍ ጊዜህን /ሽን ታጠፋለህ
/ታጠፍለሽ?

የወደፊት ዕቅዶች

25. በሚቀጥለው ዓመት ምን መስራት ትፈልጋለህ/ሽ?

ትምህርት መቀጠል ☐

ምን መማር ትፈልጋለህ/ሽ _____

መስራት ☐

ምን መስራት ትፈልጋለህ/ሽ? _____

ሌላ አማራጭ ☐

ምን ? _____

26. የወደፊት ምኞትህ/ሽ ምንድን ነው ? _____

Appendix 6: Interview guide for Students

Introduction

- Presentation of researcher and translator
- The general purpose of the study
- Purpose of the interview
- The ways in which the information will be used
- What will be expected of the interviewee
- Anonymity
- Getting permission to record the interview

Background information

- name
- age
- academic rank in class
- family size

School

1. Describe a normal day from you get up in the morning till you go to bed.
2. Describe your day at school.
3. Describe the class. (size, organized, peers)
4. Do you help each other? How?
5. What do you like/dislike about your class?
6. Describe the classroom.
7. What do you like/dislike about the classroom?
8. What do you do in the breaktime?
9. What do you like/dislike about the outdoor facilities?

Subjects

10. What are the subjects you are taught?
11. Which ones do you like the most? Why?
12. Which ones do you like the least? Why?
13. Are there other subjects that you would like to be taught?
14. Do you have books for each subject?
15. Do you get one each from the school?
16. Do you always understand what is written in the books? If no, what do you do?
17. Do you sometimes disagree with what is written? If yes, what do you do then?
18. What equipment do you need? What do you get at school?
19. **Do you like/dislike your books? Why, why not?**

20. How often do you have tests?
21. How are you assessed in different ways?
22. Is it important to get good results? Why?
23. **Do you like/dislike the tests?**

Homework

24. How much time do you spend on homework every day?
25. Do you have enough time for homework? If no, why not?
26. Do you do your homework at a fixed time?
27. Do you think you have got much homework?
28. Is the homework sometimes difficult? If yes, why? what do you do then?
29. Do you get help from anybody? From whom?
30. Do your parents check that you do your homework?
31. Where do you do your homework?
32. **Do you like/dislike homework? Why?**

The Teachers

33. Do you have any favourite teacher/s?
34. What do they do that makes you **like** him or her?
35. Are there teachers that you **don't like**? Why?
36. Describe what the teachers do in class when they teach you? (Methods)
37. Do the teachers teach in different ways?
38. Do you always understand what the teacher explains/writes on the blackboard?
39. If no, what do you do?
40. Does the teacher ask your opinion? (Encouraged?)
41. Do you sometimes disagree with the teacher? What do you do then?
42. Does the teacher smile to you?
43. Does the teacher listen to you?
44. Does the teacher talk to you?
45. Does the teacher call you by name?
46. Do you sometimes get praised? In what way? For what?
47. What do you do if you want to ask a question?
48. What does the teacher do if you have a question?
49. What do you do if you have problems?
50. What does the teacher do if you have a problem?
51. What does the teacher do if you have not done your homework?
52. What does the teacher do if you quarrel with your classmates?
53. Do you sometimes get punished? Or some of your classmates? Why?
54. What forms of punishment are used?
55. What is your opinion about punishment?

Work

1. What is the type of work you do?
2. Describe a day at work.
3. Describe your working place.
4. Why do you work?
5. Is the work you are doing harmful to you? How?
6. Do you learn from working? If yes, what?
7. Do you think the work you do is important? Why/why not?

Working hours

8. How much do you work? When and how long?
9. Do you work casually or regularly?
10. How do you manage both work and school work?

Wages

11. Do you get paid? If yes, how is the payment done?
12. Who pays you?
13. How often are you paid?
14. How do you spend the money you earn?
15. Who pays for your school materials?
16. **What do you like/dislike about the work you are doing?**

Work - School

17. Describe how your work influences on your school life? (homework, absence, late, achievements, concentration, need of extra help)
18. Do the teachers know that you work?
19. **Do you like/dislike that you work? Why?**
20. Which is most important, school or work? Why?

Future plans

1. What are you going to do next year?
2. What are your wishes for the future?
3. What plans do your parents have for your future?

Appendix 7: Interview guide for Parents

Introduction

- Presentation of researcher and translator
- The general purpose of the study
- Purpose of the interview
- The ways in which the information will be used
- What will be expected of the interviewee
- Anonymity
- Getting permission to record the interview

Background information

- Name
- Age
- Family size
- Occupation

Work

1. What kind of work does your s/d do?
2. Why does your s/d work?
3. Is the work she/he does important? Why?
4. Do you think your s/d thinks it is important that they work? Why?
5. Does your s/d like/dislike to work? Why?
6. What kind of work is harmful to children? Why?
7. What kind of work is positive? Why?

School

1. Describe the activities during a day of your son/daughter.
2. Does your s/d like school?
3. What do they say they like/dislike about school?
4. Do you know the school? If yes, how? If no, why not?
5. Do you like/dislike the school? What do you like/dislike?
6. What kind of contact do you have with the school?
7. Do you have meetings with the teachers?
8. If yes, what are the issues you discuss with the teachers?
9. Does the school know that your son/daughter work outside school?
10. Is it important that the school knows about your s/d working? Why/why not?
11. Does she/he have homework to do every day?

12. Do they have time to do their homework? Why/why not?
13. Does work influence on their academic achievement? If yes, in what way?
14. Do you discuss how to organize work and school?
15. Which is most important, school or work? Why?
16. What does your son/daughter think is most important?
17. Do you think it is important for your s/d to attend school? Why?
18. Do you think your s/d thinks it is important for him/her to attend school?
Why?

Future Plans

1. What plans does your s/d have for the future?
2. What do you want your s/d to be in the future?

Appendix 8: Interview guide for Principals

Introduction

- Presentation of researcher
- The general purpose of the study
- Purpose of the interview
- The ways in which the information will be used
- What will be expected of the interviewee
- Anonymity
- Getting permission to record the interview

Background information

- Name
- Work experience

Working students

1. Do you know about working students at your school?
2. Do the school have an overview of how many of your students that work and at the same time go to school?
3. Can you tell about the kind of work students have?
4. How do you get this information?
5. Which of the work could be considered as harmful? Why?
6. Which of the work they do could be considered as positive? Why?
7. Describe in what ways work may influence on the school life of the working students?

Cooperation with parents

8. Is there any cooperation with the parents of working students?
9. If yes, what are the main issues that you cooperate about?

What does school offer working students

10. Does this group of students have special needs? What are they?
11. How do you meet their particular needs?
12. Describe how the teachers are trained within special needs education.
13. In what way does school give attention to specific conditions of the area?

Appendix 9: Focus group discussion guide for Teachers

Introduction

- Presentation of researcher
- The general purpose of the study
- Purpose of the interview
- The ways in which the information will be used
- What will be expected of the interviewee
- Anonymity
- Getting permission to record the interview

Background Information

- Name
- Formal education
- Work experience
- Additional education

1. Working students

Do you have information about students who are working outside school?

How many students in your class work outside school?

How do you get that information?

What kind of work do they do? (The boys/the girls)

Is this information important? Why?

To whom is this information important?

2. Harmful work.

Are there any working tasks you would consider as harmful? Which?

Do you know of work done among your students that may be harmful? Which?

3. Positive work

Which work would you consider as positive?

What kind of work done among your students would you consider as positive?

4. The students' attitudes to work

Do you think the students are proud of the work they are doing?

Do you think they like/dislike the work they are doing?

5. Teachers' attitudes to work.

How do you perceive the work they are doing?

What do you think about the fact that they are working

6. Work's influence on students' school life

Describe in what way. (absence, homework, classroom activities, academic achievement, others..)

7. Special needs education

Do working children have special needs? Which?

Do you discuss about the working children in order to identify their conditions?

How do you meet their needs?

What kind of knowledge do you have within special needs education? Is it satisfactory?

What would be important improvements?

8. Teachers' role

Describe the **role** of the teacher.

Describe the **good** teacher. (Way of teaching/communication/care)

What is necessary to create good teachers?

Describe the education given to primary school teachers.

9. Curriculum/Content

Definition of curriculum.

Describe the lesson plans

What are the subjects students are taught in grade eight?

Are they taught any practical skills?

Do you give attention to the specific conditions of this area?

Do you describe the use of teaching methods in the lesson plans?

Describe the evaluation process

10. Frame Factors

What are important frame factors?

Describe the importance of the mentioned factors for the teaching- and learning process.

11. Parents

How are parents involved in the education of their children?

In what way do you cooperate with the parents?

What are the main issues that you discuss with the parents?

What kind of information do you need from the parents?

What kind of information do you need to give to the parents?

Appendix 10: “A Sense of the Whole” - general descriptions

BS1 (Boy Student 1)

In the present situation with his father being sick he has to work much more than he wishes assisting his family in their weaving business. He feels very sad when thinking of his father. Even in class he cannot always concentrate because his mind is elsewhere. He often has to work till late in the evening and also do some work in the morning, which results in coming too late at school and also sometimes not being able to manage his homework. Due to these reasons he is only ranked⁶ nine in his class. But he knows he can manage to be a top student if he could spend time on his studies rather than on work. “It is only poverty that pushes me to this,” he says. His parents understand about the importance of education, but in the present situation they will put work as more important than school since that brings income.

Coming some minutes too late to school in the morning means that he is denied to attend the first period and the teachers don’t understand his situation. They sometimes become angry. This makes him desperate. On the other hand he has a strong personal strength to overcome all the sad feelings and to manage the difficult situation without involving the teachers. “But if they knew about my situation they would probably allow me into class”, he says. “I have nice friends in my class. They say we have to study hard to succeed”. He is an active student in the class and getting good grades is important. Then he will be praised by the school which makes him proud and happy. The teachers have great respect for bright students. Most important is that this perhaps makes him able to reach some success in his life.

He is a student presenting good ideas and he is also appreciated by the teachers because of that. He wants to contribute and help the poor students. Therefore he also likes those teachers who are devoted and concerned about those who don’t have that much or those who don’t have parents. “I also like those who appreciate our attempts and encourage us to do our best,” he says. On the other hand he does not like those who use corporal punishment.

About his future he has an idea in his mind to organize an NGO that helps students in the streets. That will give him something for his daily bread and it will give him satisfaction in his mind. His parents also want him to attend education effectively and succeed.

BS2 (Boy Student 2)

This student has his own business as shoe shiner. He has, however, not chosen this because he likes this work. No, the only reason is that he has to assist his family. His mother works in a flour mill, and his father is employed as a weaver. This doesn’t give much income, only enough to survive, so in order to manage the school expenses this student has to have his own work and earn his own money. There is no knowledge to gain from this work. He also finds it harmful in the sense that he has not got any fixed place. There is no shelter so he is exposed to the sun and the coldness. His parents don’t like the work he does either. They

⁶ The students in each class are ranked according to their academic achievement.

want him to have education and they would like to support him but because they are poor they are unable to.

At school he is active, taking part in class- and drama activities. He is active in the Minimedia and in keeping the garden nice. "It is good to stay at school and I am happy with my class," he says. He eagerly expresses his own opinion. "I always argue and confront with my teachers", he says. The good thing is that the teachers encourage the students to express their own opinions. He loves his teachers. They devote themselves to us and give us whatever they know. It occurs, however, that teachers use corporal punishment. "I think, however, it is better to advice and teach and then call the parents and discuss."

He manages both work and school, and he likes school because he needs to be educated to get a job. If you are educated you know a lot of things and can help people and correct people when they do something wrong. Next year I hope to be promoted to secondary school and my plan is to be an engineer.

BS3 (Boy Student 3)

This student assists his mother in the household works. He feels happy that he can help her and the work also gives him knowledge and experience. His parents too think it is important that he works because there is no one else to help them. "But because of the national exam this year my parents don't want me to work too much." They also think that education is important; it is basic to get some change in life. They know the benefit as they have themselves attended school. "They want me to reach a good status, but it is for me to decide."

This student eagerly expresses his opinions about student participation and about how to organize the class. He does not always agree with his teacher and then he opposes him. But he says he is too shy to ask questions in the class so instead he tries to call the teacher when he goes to the staff room. He says that many students are shy. The teacher's behaviour is, however, important. We have to learn to know the teacher and adapt to his way of behaving. He has some favourite teachers. They give respect to the student, follow the progress of the student, correct the homework and give good follow-up. He dislikes those who leave the class before the period ends.

Sometimes teachers use corporal punishment and he doesn't totally reject the use of it. "In a mild and teaching form I can support it. What I hate is that some punish without selecting the body parts."

He thinks the school is nice and he has good friends in his class. The class has become more disciplined and friendly because regulations have been set and approved by the students themselves. Now they respect the regulations.

GS1 (Girl Student 1)

This student is first of all prioritizing her studies and her homework, but she always has time for assisting her mother with various household activities such as making ceremonial coffee, cooking wots or baking injera. But her mother doesn't want it to be too much. But she learns from the work she is doing, she learns to manage a home and she gets blessing and praise from her parents that appreciate her work.

Also at school she is the kind of person always assisting by sharing her knowledge with her classmates or helping the monitor keeping silence and order in the class. She is active in the minimedia service at the school. She is so happy about the new building giving opportunities to new students attending classes. And having contributed to the project makes her satisfied. In that way she has participated in the development of her school.

She has to control and to lead herself. The parents cannot help her as they are illiterate. That makes her unhappy. But it is important for them that she attends school and they always give priority to her education.

She is actively participating in class and has her own opinions. She may disagree with the teachers, but is not easily convinced and does not accept points that her mind does not accept. Some teachers have the skill to teach in a magnificent way that we easily grasp, some are difficult to understand. The devoted teachers understand the student, they want to share whatever knowledge they have and want to help them. Then there are some who don't care.

She is never absent so it is important for her that we find time for our interview after school has finished. She likes school and education is essential in her life. So getting good results is important. That brings about self esteem, positive personality, helps her to work hard and get better results. She wants to attend Addis Ababa University and be a doctor. For her parents it is important that she may do whatever she likes.

GS2 (Girl Student 2)

This student is actively taking part in the family business which is weaving. Apart from the family members involved there are 7 employed, so altogether they are 14. She has to give priority to this job and unless she has finished doing the job she will not feel at ease doing her homework. Homework is also sometimes very difficult and they have a lot, and the teachers don't accept lame reasons for not having done the homework. They are very strict, she says. In spite of this she is happy about her homework. In her family they organize work and homework in such a way that some work when others study. The family tries to support her morally in the education and also buy necessary equipment, but the parents say the job is more important than school. For the future they need her to work for them and support them and "they don't think about my education."

The work is their survival. It is important as they make these traditional, cultural clothes and important because it makes the persons who wears it happy. "But for us it is tiresome and we sell it for cheap."

The work influences negatively on her education. She is sometimes absent and late to school and her results are not satisfactorily.

She is happy to be in school where she can grasp some knowledge. She likes the breaks when they go to the sports field or the free classes without teacher. The classroom, however, is dusty and smells and the desks are broken and uncomfortable and not clean. The more mature students, of which she is one, participate in cleaning the classroom and the compound which is only based on their own interest.

When speaking about her teachers she has some favourites. Those are the ones that help her and understand her, that make the students enjoy and feel free in the class, explain the topic

in an easy manner so they feel relaxed and enjoy the subject. When she doesn't like the teacher she starts to hate the subject.

She clearly sees the importance of education because that may change the status of her life. So she wants to be strong in her education and would like to be a scientist and help people in the work against HIV.

GS3 (Girl Student 3)

This student likes to be at school. The situation at home, however, makes her desperate. Her intoxicated father always disturbs during the night so that she often comes too late. She is not able to attend class properly and is in a bad condition because she is tired. But in a way she gets used to feeling tired.

She used to have work outside home but she has decided to stop which is good for her. Then she goes directly home from school and does her homework in the afternoon. That usually makes her manage to do it all. But of course sometimes she doesn't and that creates problems for her because the teachers are very serious and strict and give her a hard time when she has not done her homework. So what about explaining to them about her situation? But no, she does not feel comfortable to tell the secrets of the family to anyone. And by the way, what can they do to solve the problem? Nothing, she thinks.

Her main task in the home is to bake injera but she also helps with cooking and cleaning "and I can even make doro wot⁷." She likes the work she is doing because she helps her mom and makes her to get a rest. It is also important and useful work because knowing these skills I can manage my private life in the future.

Her mother thinks education is important and wants her to reach a better position and even if she is sick she doesn't want her to work hard. "But I have to support my mom so sometimes when she wants to bake injera I don't allow her."

"At school I get relief. It is a safe haven." She is very happy about her class and compared to other classes they have a good culture of helping each other. The good teacher for her is the one that can laugh with them, that is serious, that makes her feel at ease and encourages them to ask questions. She also gets some important knowledge. Her plan for the future is to continue her education and become a doctor.

⁷ Sauce with chicken eaten together with injera

Appendix 11: Formulated Meaning Units

Formulated meanings of significant statements: satisfied

Knowledge

1. Education will bring about some improvement in their lives.
2. They are happy to be in school where they can grasp some new knowledge.
3. The books are the source of knowledge. They like them
4. Through the homework they learn a lot and they try to do as much as they can. So they have to work their homework seriously.
5. When the homework is properly done they get love and respect from the teachers, they will be active and participate in class. That gives self confidence and they will be respected also by the class mates.
6. It is good to have the tests that often.
7. When they get good grades they will be praised by the teachers and that makes them proud and happy which is prize for their hard work
8. Good results brings about self esteem, positive personality, keeps you up and is an encouragement to work hard and get even better results.

Class

9. They have a nice class and are good friends
10. Compared to the other classes at the school there is a good culture of helping each other in their class.
11. While sitting mixed in the class the better students manage to help the others. It is good for those who need it to have the chance to discuss with the more outstanding student of the class

Physical environment

12. The school compound is nice because of the trees, the garden and the flowers.
13. The compound is there for the students to use.
14. The library is nice and clean
15. "It is known that we Ethiopians are very poor so compared to that the school is very good"
16. The classrooms are big so there is enough space for the students and the number of students in the class is not that much.

Teachers

17. The good teachers are those who appreciate their attempts, encourage them to do their best. They work hard to help the students and they are friendly and make the students to feel free in the class. They are open and honest and can laugh with the students.

18. The good teachers devote themselves, they give whatever they know and they don't discriminate the students.
19. The good teachers will listen to them when they explain and they will understand
20. The good teachers give respect to the students
21. They will follow the progress of the students, correct the homework and give good follow-up.
22. The good teachers have the skill to teach in a magnificent way. That makes them feel relaxed and enjoy the subject
23. The good teachers encourage them to express their own opinion.
24. It is common to be praised by the teachers. That is done by appreciating them in front of the others who will clap for them when they have done well and are actively participating. They tell them to keep up.
25. The good teachers call the students by their names

Formulated meanings of significant statements: not satisfied

Knowledge

1. They get much homework over the weekend as it is supposed that they have time then.
2. The teachers are strict and give the students a hard time if they don't manage
3. It would have been nice to have music and art
4. The textbooks are not always available because they have been revised and not yet finished
5. The library should have had more books and it is not always available

Class

6. Even if the discipline has become better it happens that someone in the class disturb and that makes it difficult to concentrate or to have discussions

Physical environment

7. They are disturbed right now by the gravelling due to the construction of new buildings. That means that the sport field is reduced.
8. The toilets are very shabby and the students suffer because of that. They are not clean and they are full.
9. The classrooms are not always clean. The dust is a problem, so even if they are cleaned the desks are full of dust and the clothes and the books get dirty.

Teachers

10. Teachers that are not liked by the students are those who don't listen and don't understand their situation or their conditions, those who sit in the staffroom ignoring the students or leave the class too early. They just don't care. They are not interested and don't correct their exercise books. They have no respect for their students.
11. They don't like when the teachers use corporal punishment.

Appendix 12: Clusters of Themes

1. “I am happy to be in school where I can grasp some new knowledge”

- a) The knowledge gained results in the satisfaction of knowing that they are given the opportunity to improve their lives.
- b) The books are good. The students like them. They are the source of knowledge. What is written in the books is looked upon as science so they mostly take whatever the books say. At the library they get supplementary books.
- c) They learn a lot through the homework when they do it seriously.
- d) Getting good grades is prize for their hard work
- e) In class there is a good culture of helping each other. The better students manage to help those who need it.

2. “The good teachers devote themselves”.

- a) The good teachers act by praising the students, appreciating their attempts, encouraging them to do their best and to participate and express their own opinions, helping them, laughing with them, treating everybody the same, listening to them and understanding them, respecting them and calling them by their names.
- b) The professional teachers impart knowledge and have the skill of teaching in a way that makes them feel relaxed, participate and enjoy the subjects. They follow the progress of the student, correct their homework and give good follow-up. This will encourage them to do their best which gives better results. Good results bring about self esteem, positive personality and encouragement to work hard.
- c) The personality of the good teachers is characterized by openness, honesty and friendliness.
- d) The devoted teacher gives them love and respect which makes them more active in the class and they feel free and safe to participate. This gives them self confidence.
- e) The devoted teacher praises them for working their best which makes them proud and happy. That is prize for their hard work.

3. “It is known that we Ethiopians are very poor, so compared to that the school is very good”.

- a) The classroom is big so there is space enough for the students.
- b) The number of students in the class is not that much.
- c) The library is nice and clean.
- d) The compound is nice because of the trees, the garden and the flowers and it is there for us to use
- e) The compound is now disturbed by gravelling for the new buildings which has reduced the opportunities for out door activities. But it is temporary.
- f) The toilets are shabby and the students suffer because of that.
- g) The dust is a problem. Even if the classrooms are cleaned they are still dusty and the books and the clothes get dirty. For those who suffer from allergy it is very bad.

4. “Some teachers do not understand our conditions”

- a) The students don’t like the teachers that don’t listen, that don’t understand their situation and lack respect for them. The teachers who don’t give the necessary time and interest to the students leads to a situation whereby the students feel they are not being listened to and understood. It will make the students afraid and shy and not given the possibility to ask necessary questions. With this lack of respect towards the students they may be treated in a harsh manner and sometimes being harassed.
- b) The unprofessional teachers sit in the staffroom and they leave the class too early. They don’t follow up or correct their exercise books. Their effort is limited to what is absolutely necessary.
- c) They show an attitude of carelessness. The unprofessional teachers don’t do what they are expected to do and that makes the students sad. They will start to hate the subject and it will influence on their academic performance. In the end it spoils their education.